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HUMAN PROBLEMS IN BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA

XXX

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EDITORIAL NOTES

DR. TURNER'S article on Ndembu Symbolism is based on field-work undertaken in 1950–4 as a Research Officer of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. It is based on a Paper delivered at the International African Institute Seminar on ' African Systems of Thought, Religious Belief and Ritual: Traditional and Modern ' at Salisbury in December 1960. We are indebted to the Director of the International African Institute for permitting us to publish this paper in slightly amended form.

Spirit possession and mediumship is a widespread phenomenon in African societies, but detailed descriptions of its operation in society are still few. Dr. Beattie's article not only contributes to the body of data which he has already published about the Nyoro, but provides valuable comparative material in this subject.

Dr. Bettison's ' Poverty Datum Line in Central Africa ' (*Human Problems*, XXVIII) has aroused considerable interest in the Federation. In their ' Note on the Poverty Datum Line ', Mrs. Thomson and Mr. Kay criticize certain aspects of Bettison's methods and conclusions. We present these criticisms together with Dr. Bettison's rejoinder under a general editorial comment on the Poverty Datum Line concept.

Correction: In the list of Rhodes-Livingstone Affiliate Workers on page 27 of Journal No. 29, it was erroneously noted that Mr. Arthur Tuden was from Princeton University. Mr. Tuden was, in fact, a post-graduate student in the Programme of African Studies, Northwestern University, and we apologize for any inconvenience which may have been caused.

Contributors to this Issue

V. W. Turner, formerly a Research Officer of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, is now lecturing in Social Anthropology at Manchester University. He is the author of *Schism and Continuity in an African Society*, and of numerous articles and papers.

John Beattie, formerly at Makerere, is now lecturing in Social Anthropology at Oxford. He has done research in East Africa, especially on the Nyoro, about whom he has written several papers.

B. Thomson and **G. Kay** were engaged on the World Health Organization Health and Nutrition Scheme at Fort Rosebery, Northern Rhodesia, as nutritionist and human geographer, respectively. Mr. Kay is also a Research Officer of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. Papers by both Mrs. Thomson and Mr. Kay have been published by the Institute.

RITUAL SYMBOLISM, MORALITY AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE AMONG THE NDEMBU

by

V. W. TURNER

The Ndembu of Mwinilunga District

THE Ndembu, numbering about seventeen thousand, today inhabit the western portion of Mwinilunga District in the North-Western Province of Northern Rhodesia, approximately between 11° and 12° south latitude. They claim to have come as invaders some three centuries ago from the Northern Lunda empire (Luunda) of Mwantiyanvwa and to have conquered or received the submission of small scattered groups of indigenous Mbwela or Lukolwe.

On their well-wooded plateau the Ndembu practise a form of subsistence cultivation in which cassava-growing is associated with hunting. In addition to cassava, finger millet is grown by small circle ash-planting methods mainly for beer-making, and maize is cultivated in streamside gardens for food and beer.

They are a matrilineal, virilocal people, with high personal spatial mobility, and inhabit small villages with cores of male matrikin of whom the oldest member of the senior genealogical generation is usually the headman.

The Ndembu did not have the high degree of political centralization enjoyed by their Northern Lunda ancestors. Villages in pre-European times possessed considerable political autonomy. Under British rule, however, a hierarchy has been established consisting of a Chief (the ' Native Authority ') and four Sub-Chiefs. Formerly, these Sub-Chiefs belonged to a class of senior village headmen who held renowned historical titles but had little real power.

Aspects of Ndembu Ritual Symbolism

In this paper I wish to discuss the semantic structure and properties of some of the principal symbols found in Ndembu ritual. Each kind of ritual may be regarded as a configuration of symbols, a sort of ' score ' of which the symbols are the notes. [The symbol is the smallest unit of specific structure in Ndembu ritual.] The vernacular term for symbol is *chinjikijilu*, from *ku-jikijila*, ' to blaze a trail '—by cutting marks on a tree with one's axe or by breaking and bending branches to serve as guides back from the unknown bush to known paths. A symbol, then, is a ' blaze ' or ' landmark ', something that connects the unknown and the known. The Ndembu term comes from the vocabulary of hunting and exemplifies the high ritual value attached to this pursuit. Furthermore, in

discussing their symbols with Ndembu one finds them constantly using the term *ku-solola*, ' to make visible ' or ' to reveal ', and they associate this term with aspects of the chase. Indeed, in their ritual vocabulary derivatives of this verb are frequent. For example, the temporary shrine erected for ritual to propitiate the spirits of deceased hunter relatives very often consists of a forked branch taken from the *musoli* tree. Ndembu tell me that this tree is used as a symbol in hunters' ritual because its fruit and young shoots are much appreciated by duiker and other woodland animals who emerge from concealment to eat them and may be easily shot by a hidden hunter or caught in his snares. The tree, they say, makes the game ' visible '. Hence portions of it are used as medicines (*yitumbu*) in rituals performed to rid hunters of misfortune. It is said that these medicines will ' make animals appear quickly to the hunter ' when next he goes into the bush. *Musoli* medicines are also used in rituals performed to make barren women fruitful; they will ' make children visible ', say Ndembu.

Another use of *musoli* is worth mentioning. Ndembu have a ritual called *Ihamba*, the main aim of which is to remove by cupping horns from a patient's body the upper central incisor (also called *ihamba*) of a dead hunter relative which has imbedded itself under the skin. The spirit, materialized as a tooth, is said to ' bite ' its victim because the latter has forgotten to pour out a libation of blood at its grave after making a kill or else because there has been quarrelling in the victim's village. The victim may not necessarily have been guilty himself of quarrelsome behaviour but may have been selected as a representative of the disordered kin-group. The specialist who supervises the ritual procedure usually insists on those village members who have grudges (*yitela*) against one another or against the patient (*muyeji*) coming forward and making a public confession of their hidden animosities. Only after this, he says, will the *ihamba* consent to being caught in a cupping horn. Now the principal medicine of this ritual, the one at which an invocation to the spirit is made, the one which is collected before all others, consists of the tap-root of a *musoli* tree. My informants told me that the root stood for the *ihamba* tooth and that the *musoli* species was used: (*a*) ' to make the *ihamba* tooth come out quickly ', and (*b*) ' so that people would speak truly (*ku-hosha chalala*) and openly '. Here the idea is clearly that relief is brought both to the patient and to the disturbed social group if hidden ill-feeling is brought to light.

Another derivative of *ku-solola*, ' to reveal ', is *isoli* or *chisoli*, terms which designate ' a place of revelation '. They refer to specially consecrated sites, used only in the final phases of important rituals, where esoteric rites are performed and secret matters are revealed to the initiated.

Finally, the term *Musolu* stands for a type of ritual performed only by chiefs and senior headmen to bring on or ' make visible ' delayed rains.

One aspect of the process of ritual symbolization among the Ndembu is, therefore, to make visible, audible and tangible beliefs, ideas, values, sentiments and psychological dispositions which cannot directly be perceived. Associated with this process of revealing the unknown, invisible or the hidden is the process of making public what is private, or making social what is personal. Anything that cannot be shown to be in conformity with the norms or in terms of the values of Ndembu society is potentially dangerous to its cohesion and continuity. Hence the importance of the public confession in the *Ihamba* ritual. By exposing their ill-feeling in a ritual context to beneficial ritual forces, individuals are purged of rebellious wishes and emotions and willingly conform once more to the public mores.

In an Ndembu ritual each symbol makes visible and accessible to purposive public action certain elements of Ndembu culture and society. It also tends to relate these elements to certain natural and physiological regularities. Thus in various contexts *musoli* relates the value of public confession to the restoration of health and of female fertility. This brings me to another important property of many ritual symbols, their *polysemy* or *multivocality*. By these rather grandiose terms I mean that a single symbol may stand for many things. This property of individual symbols is true of ritual as a whole. For a few symbols have to represent a whole culture and its material environment. Ritual may be described, in one aspect, as *quintessential custom* in that it represents a distillate or condensation of many secular customs and natural regularities. Certain dominant or focal symbols conspicuously possess this property of multivocality which allows for the economic representation of key aspects of culture and belief. Each dominant symbol has a ' fan ' or ' spectrum ' of referents, which are interlinked by what is usually a simple mode of association, its very simplicity enabling it to interconnect a wide variety of *significata*. For example, the associational link provided by ' whiteness ' enables white clay (*mpemba*) to stand for a multiplicity of ideas and phenomena, ranging from such biological referents as ' semen ' to abstract ideas such as ' ritual purity ', ' innocence ' from witchcraft and ' solidarity with the ancestor spirits '.

When we talk about the ' meaning ' of a symbol, we must be careful to distinguish between at least three ' levels ' or ' fields ' of meaning. These I propose to call: (1) the level of indigenous interpretation (or, briefly, the *exegetical meaning*); (2) the *operational meaning*; and (3) the *positional meaning*. The exegetical meaning is obtained from questioning indigenous informants about observed ritual behaviour. Here again one must distinguish between information given by ritual specialists and information given by laymen, i.e. between *esoteric* and *exoteric* interpretations. One must also be careful to ascertain whether a given explanation is truly representative of either of these categories or whether it is a uniquely personal view.

On the other hand, much light may be shed on the role of the ritual symbol by equating its meaning with its *use*, by observing what the Ndembu do with it, and not only what they say about it. This is what I call the *operational meaning*, and this level has the most bearing on problems of social dynamics. For the observer must consider not only the symbol but the structure and composition of the group which handles it or performs mimetic acts with direct reference to it. He must further note the affective qualities of these acts, whether they are aggressive, sad, penitent, joyful, derisive, and so on. He must also enquire why certain persons and groups are *absent* on given occasions, and, if absent, whether and why they have been ritually *excluded* from the presence of the symbol.

The *positional meaning* of a symbol derives from its relationship to other symbols in a totality, a Gestalt, whose elements acquire their significance from the system as a whole. This level of meaning is directly related to the important property of ritual symbols mentioned earlier—their polysemy. Such symbols possess many senses, but contextually it may be necessary to stress one or a few of them only. Thus the *mukula* tree viewed in abstraction from any given ritual context may stand for ' matriliny ', ' huntsmanship ', ' menstrual blood ', ' the meat of wild animals ' and many other concepts and things. The associational link between its various senses is provided by the red gum it secretes which Ndembu liken to blood. Now in the boys' circumcision ritual (*Mukanda*) the meaning of *mukula* is determined by its symbolic context. A log of this wood is placed near the site where the boys are circumcised. They are circumcised under a *mudyi* tree, which, as we shall see, stands *inter alia* for motherhood and the mother–child relationship. Then they are lifted over a cutting of the *muyombu* tree, which is customarily planted quick-set as a shrine to the village ancestor spirits, and placed still bleeding on the *mukula* log. Here the *mukula* log stands mainly for two things. It represents the wish of the elders that the circumcision wounds will heal quickly—from the fact that *mukula* quickly coagulates like a scab. But it also represents, I was told, masculinity (*wuyala*), and the life of an adult male, who as hunter and warrior has to shed blood. The rite represents (*a*) the removal of the boy from dependence on his mother (the passage from the *mudyi* tree); (*b*) his ritual death and subsequent association with the ancestors (the passage over the *muyombu* tree); and (*c*) his incorporation into the male moral community of tribesmen (the collective sitting on the *mukula* tree where the boys are ceremonially fed as though they were infants by the circumcisers and by their fathers. Each boy is given a ball of cassava mush to be eaten directly from the circumciser's knife). In this rite the position of the *mukula* symbol with reference to other symbolic objects and acts is the crucial semantic factor.

The same symbol may be reckoned to have different senses at different phases in a ritual performance, or, rather, different senses

become paramount at different times. Which sense shall become paramount is determined by the ostensible purpose of the phase of the ritual in which it appears. For a ritual, like a space-rocket, is phased, and each phase is directed towards a limited end which itself becomes a means to the ultimate end of the total performance. Thus the act of circumcision is the aim and culmination of a symbol-loaded phase of the *Mukanda* ritual, but itself becomes a means to the final end of turning a boy into a tribesman. There is a consistent relationship between the end or aim of each phase in a ritual, the kind of symbolic configuration employed in that phase, and the senses which become paramount in multivocal symbols in that configuration.

I would now like to consider the exegetical meaning of one of the principal Ndembu ritual symbols, the *mudyi* tree. This symbol is found in more than half a dozen different kinds of ritual. But its *locus classicus* is in the girl's puberty ritual (*Nkang'a*). The novice is laid, wrapped in a blanket, at the foot of a slender young *mudyi* sapling. Ndembu say that its pliancy stands for the youth of the girl. The sapling has been previously consecrated by the novice's ritual instructress (*nkong'u*) and her mother. They trampled down the grass in a circle around the tree, thus making it sacred—'set apart' (*chakumbodyi*) or 'forbidden' (*chakujila*). The site, like that of circumcision for the boys, is called *ifwilu* or 'the place of dying'. Both sites are also known as *ihung'u* 'the place of suffering' or 'ordeal'. *Ihung'u* is also applied to a hut where a woman is in labour. It is a 'place of suffering' because the novice must not move her limbs until nearly nightfall on penalty of being pinched all over by the older women. Nor may she eat or speak all day. The association of the *mudyi* tree with suffering and dying should be borne in mind as an aspect of its positional meaning.

Ndembu begin the exposition of *mudyi's* meaning by pointing out that if its bark is scratched beads of milky latex are promptly secreted. For this reason they say that *mudyi* or 'milk-tree' is a symbol (*chinjikijilu*) for 'breasts' and 'breast milk'—both called in Chindembu *mayeli*. They go on from there to say that *mudyi* means 'a mother and her child', i.e. a social relationship. They further extend this sense to signify a matrilineage (*ivumu*—literally 'a womb or stomach'). A text which I collected well expresses this view:

'*Mudyi diku kwakaminiyi nkakulula hakumutembwisha aninka-kulula*

'The milk-tree is the place where slept the [founding] ancestress, where they initiated her and another ancestress

nukwawu nimukwawu ni kudi nkaka ni kudi mama ninetu anyana; and [then] another down to the grandmother and the mother and ourselves the children;

diku kumuchidi wetu kutwatachikili ni amayala nawa chochu hamu.' It is the place where our tribe [or tribal custom—literally ' kind '] began, and also the men in just the same way.'

My informant then added the following comments: ' The milk-tree is the place of all mothers; it is the ancestress of men and women. *Ku-tembwisha*, " to initiate a girl ", means to dance round and round the milk-tree where the novice lies. The milk-tree is the place where our ancestress slept; to be initiated there means to become ritually pure or white. An uninitiated girl, a menstruating woman or an uncircumcised boy is called " one who lacks whiteness (*wuna-bulakutooka*) ".'

Contextually, a particular novice's milk-tree may be termed ' *her matrilineage* '. At one phase of the ritual, the leaves of this tree are said to represent ' the novice's children '—a sense which is concerned with a future wished-for state of affairs rather than with the past or present.

In other phases of the *Nkang'a* ritual the milk-tree is said to stand for ' the women ' and for ' womanhood '. It also has the situational sense of ' married womanhood '.

Finally, the milk-tree stands for the process of learning (*ku-diza*), especially for learning ' women's sense ' or ' wisdom ' (*mana yawambanda*). An informant said that ' *mudyi* is like going to school; the girl drinks sense as a baby drinks milk '.

The semantic structure of *mudyi* may itself be likened to a tree. At the root is the primary sense of ' breast milk ' and from this proceeds by logical steps series of further senses. The general direction is from the concrete to the increasingly abstract but there are several different branches along which abstraction proceeds. One line develops as follows: breast, mother-child relationship, matriliny, the Ndembu tribe or tribal custom of which matriliny is the most representative principle. Another line runs: development of the breasts, womanhood, married womanhood, childbearing. Yet another goes from suckling to learning the tasks, rights and duties of womanhood. As with many other Ndembu symbols derivative senses themselves become symbols pointing to ideas and phenomena beyond themselves. Thus ' matriliny ', a derivative sense from the ' mother-child relationship ' and ' breast-milk ', by the principle of *pars pro toto*, itself becomes a symbol for Ndembu culture in its totality.

But despite this multiplicity of senses Ndembu speak and think about the milk-tree as a unity, almost as a unitary *power*. They can break down the concept ' milk-tree ' cognitively into many attributes, but in ritual practice they view it as a single entity. For them it is something like Goethe's ' eternal womanly ', a female or maternal principle pervading society and nature. For it must not be forgotten that ritual symbols are not merely signs representing known things; they are felt to possess ritual *efficacy*, to be charged with power from unknown sources, and to be capable of acting on

persons and groups coming in contact with them in such a way as to change them for the better or in a desired direction. Symbols, in short, have an orectic as well as a cognitive function. They elicit emotion and express and mobilize desire.

Indeed it is possible further to conceptualize the exegetic meaning of dominant symbols in *polar* terms. At one pole cluster a set of referents of a grossly physiological character, relating to general-human experiences of an emotional kind. At the other pole cluster a set of referents to moral norms and principles governing the social structure. If we call these semantic poles respectively the ' orectic ' and the ' normative ' pole, and consider Ndembu ritual symbols in terms of this model, we find that the milk-tree stands at one and the same time for the physiological aspect of breast-feeding with its associated affectual patterns, and for the normative order governed by matriliny. In brief, a single symbol represents both the obligatory and the desirable. Here we have an intimate union of the moral and the material. An exchange of qualities may take place in the psyches of the participants under the stimulating circumstances of the ritual performance, between the orectic and normative poles; the former, through its association with the latter, becomes purged of its infantile and regressive character, while the normative pole becomes charged with the pleasurable affect associated with the breast-feeding situation. In one aspect, the tie of milk, under matriliny, develops into the primary structural tie. But in another aspect, and here the polar model is apposite, the former stands opposed to and resists the formation of the latter.

Other important Ndembu symbols have a similar polar structure. *Mukula*, for example, in the context of *Nkula*, a ritual performed to cure menstrual disorders, represents at its orectic pole the ' blood of birth ', while, at the normative pole, it represents matriliny and also the historical connection between the Ndembu and the empire of Mwantiyanvwa in the Congo, whose first incumbent, a female chief called Luweji Ankonde, suffered from menorrhagia. The tough *chikoli* thorn tree, which plays an important role in the boys' circumcision ritual, is said to stand for ' masculinity ' in the moral and social sense. It is said to stand for courage (*wulubu*), skill at hunting, and for ' speaking well in legal cases '. But *chikoli* also has its physiological pole. To quote one informant: ' *Chikoli* is a very strong tree, its wood is very hard. One name for it is *chikang'anjamba*, from *ku-kang'anya*, " to fail ", and *njamba*, " the elephant ". The elephant fails to break it. Neither wind nor rain can break it, and white ants cannot eat it. It stands upright like the male organ, or a man's strong body. That is why we say it represents strength (*wukolu*)'. *Chikoli*, like *wukolu*, is derived from *ku-kola*, ' to be strong or potent '. I could cite many other Ndembu examples, if time permitted, of this polarity, which I consider to be a universal feature of ritual symbols of any semantic complexity.

But let us return to the *mudyi* tree, this time to observe what takes

place near and around it on the day of the novice's ordeal, the phase of *Kwing'ija*, or ' Putting in ', with which the Girls' Puberty Ritual (*Nkang'a*) begins. For now we are going to consider the *operational meaning* of the milk-tree. Immediately we are confronted with a problem. For whereas it can be argued that on the exegetic level of meaning, the structural referents of the milk-tree are concerned with the harmonious and solidary aspects of groups and relationships organized by matriliny or femininity, it is immediately obvious that much of the behaviour observable in connection with it represents a mimesis of conflict within those very groups and relationships.

For example, in the early hours of the morning only the senior women of the novice's own village may dance around the *mudyi* tree. Later on, only women, and not men, may dance there, and the women attack the men in jeering and lampooning songs. Moreover, for a long time the girl's mother may not approach the *mudyi* tree, and when she eventually does so, she is mocked by the senior women. I might also mention an episode in which all the senior women compete to be first to snatch a spoon of cassava mush and beans, called ' the porridge of *chipwampwilu* ' from the ritual instructress. This porridge represents fertility, and in particular the novice's fertility. If a woman from a distant village grabs the spoon first, this is thought to mean that the novice will bear her children far away from her mother's place of residence. This episode represents competition between the principles of matriliny and virilocality. Other episodes in *Nkang'a* also signify this conflict, though most of them do not have direct reference to the milk-tree.

Thus, during different episodes the value attached to the solidarity of women is contradicted in practice by the conflict between the novice's mother and the adult women who are ritually incorporating her daughter into their married ranks and removing her from her mother's knee. It is further contradicted by the separation of the novice's village members from the other women, and by the rivalry, on a village basis, between the women for the novice's fertility, and between individual women for fertility. The unity of the tribe is contradicted by the mobilization of the women around the milk-tree in jeering opposition to the men. And the novice's ordeal, with the threat of punishment if she moves, represents one aspect of the conflict between senior women and girls.

What is interesting is that indigenous informants do not relate these conflicts, stereotyped though they be, to their orthodox interpretations of the symbolism of the milk-tree. Yet these mimed conflicts have to take place at the *ifwilu*, the novice's ' dying-place ', which is located next to the milk-tree. A psycho-analyst of the Kleinian school might be tempted perhaps to relate the contrast between the exegetic and operational levels of meaning, between the emphasis on harmony and the emphasis on discord, to the infant's ambivalent attitude to the mother's breast, which both

soothes him and arouses hostility by its apparently capricious absences. He might regard the lack of interpretation of the conflict behaviour as due to the psychological ' splitting ' mechanism which separates the hostile from the loving attitude to the breast and thrusts this hostility into the unconscious psyche. But it is theoretically inadmissible to explain social facts, such as ritual symbols, by the concepts of depth psychology. A sociological hypothesis to account for the contradiction between these levels of meaning might be advanced to the effect that on the exegetic level, the principle of matriliny is abstracted from its social context and appears in its ideal purity. The conflicts within groups and relationships articulated by matriliny which are exhibited at the operational level are not due to the structural inadequacies of matriliny or to human frailty with regard to keeping rules, but rather result from other principles of social organization which constantly and consistently interfere with the harmonious working of matriliny. Age and sex differences cut across matrilineal affiliation. Virilocal marriage strikes into the cohesion of a local matrilineage. The matricentric family makes rival demands on the loyalty of members of a matrilineage. Type-conflicts of these kinds are acted out before the milk-tree, the arch-symbol of matrilineal continuity, and of the ultimate dependence of Ndembu society on the mother's breast. The puberty ritual asserts that though matriliny may regularly be challenged by other principles and trends, yet it persists and triumphs.

In conclusion, I would like to draw attention to the relationship between the milk-tree symbolism and the symbolic principle of ' whiteness ' (*wutooka*) on the exegetic level of interpretation. At the apex of the total symbolic system of the Ndembu is the colour triad, white—red—black. At certain esoteric episodes in the boys' circumcision ritual and in the initiation ritual of the men's and women's funerary associations of *Mung'ong'i* and *Chiwila* the meanings of these three colours are taught to young Ndembu. Whiteness is most commonly represented by powdered white clay (*mpemba* or *mpeza*), redness by powdered red clay (*mukundu*, *ng'ula* or *mukung'u*), and blackness by charcoal (*makala*). These substances are not so much symbols as tokens of three vital principles, akin to the Hindu ' strands of life ' mentioned in the Bhagavadgita. I have collected many texts and made many observations of the use of these colours in ritual, and may therefore state briefly that whiteness stands, *inter alia*, for ' goodness (*ku-waha*), health (*ku-koleka*), ritual purity (*ku-tooka*), freedom from misfortune (*ku-bula ku-halwa*), for political authority (*kwanuka akishi*) and for assembling with the spirits (*kudibomba niakishi*) '. To sum up drastically: it represents the entire moral order plus the fruits of virtue; health, strength, fertility, the respect of one's fellows and the blessing of one's ancestors. Whiteness differs from redness in that it stresses harmony, cohesion and continuity, while redness, associated with blood-spilling as well as with blood-kinship, tends to denote discontinuity,

strength acquired through breach of certain rules, and male aggressiveness (as in hunting, which is represented in many rituals by red clay and red symbols). Blackness, like redness, is ambivalent. On the one hand, it represents ' evil ' (*ku-tama*, the antonym of *ku-waha*), and many of its manifestations: ' death ' (*ku-fwa*), ' witchcraft/sorcery ' (*wuloji*), and ' darkness ' (*mwidima*), the milieu of evil things. It also stands for sterility. For example, when a sterile person dies a line of black charcoal is drawn from his navel downwards. This is thought to prevent his partial reincarnation in a child named after him. On the other hand, blackness in the life-crisis rituals just mentioned quite clearly represents not physical death but the termination of a state of life, as when boys ' die ' from childhood at the moment of circumcision and are reborn as men. Again, black alluvial mud (*malowa*) is frequently used in ritual as a symbol of ' coolness ' or ' peace '.[1] Although informants stress that the sense of this symbol is derived from the contact of *malowa* with running water, nevertheless they admit that its black colour also represents ' death '. But here it has the note of cessation from disturbance and anger, of ' all passion spent '.

It is in this general context of colour symbolism that we must first examine the concept of ' whiteness ', and afterwards the category of symbols which Ndembu call ' white things ' (*yuma yitooka*). Now there are many symbols which Ndembu themselves class as ' white things ' and which they believe to be pervaded by the moral attributes of the principle of whiteness. The milk-tree, representing matriliny, is one of these. For Ndembu, matriliny is what Professor Fortes has called, though in rather a different connection, an ' irreducible principle '[2] of social organization, through which the moral order, with all its prescription and prohibitions, is mediated to the individual. Matriliny is the framework of those aspects of Ndembu morality which the people regard as changeless and as harmoniously interrelated nodal points. It would be possible to show that the norms and values controlling those relationships derived from the tie of milk form the ' matrix ' of the moral order, and have ideally what Ndembu would regard as a ' white ' quality.

[1] See, for example, my *Ndembu Divination: Its Symbolism and Techniques*, Rhodes-Livingstone Paper Number Thirty-one, M.U.P. (1961), p. 29.
[2] Cf. *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*, O.U.P. (1949), p. 344.

GROUP ASPECTS OF THE NYORO SPIRIT MEDIUMSHIP CULT†

by
JOHN BEATTIE

I

LIKE other interlacustrine Bantu peoples, the Nyoro of western Uganda have a cult of spirit mediumship,[1] and in this article I consider some of its group aspects. In the first part I give some account of the Nyoro spirit pantheon, and discuss its traditional association with the agnatically based local groups into which the Nyoro community is said formerly to have been organized, as to a limited extent it still is. In the second part I consider the group or ' secret society ' aspect of cult membership itself. And in a final section I discuss present-day changes in the cult's social significance, in particular its increasing individualism. I have elsewhere given some account of the rites of initiation into cult membership,[2] and I leave for future consideration such matters as the psychological significance of spirit possession in Bunyoro, its cathartic and theatrical aspects, and its importance as an element in a system of social sanctions.

Nyoro believe that there are many powers or forces outside themselves of an immaterial or ' spiritual ' kind, which may have effects, beneficial or (more usually) injurious, on living people. Although these spirits are individualized, even ' personalized ', so that human qualities are ascribed to them and they have their own proper names, they are thought of as somehow dispersed through space—or, perhaps, not concerned with space at all. Thus there is nothing to prevent the same spirit from manifesting itself in two or in any number of places at the same time. When pressed, informants say that they are ' like wind ' (*nk'omuyaga*), for the same wind may blow at the same time in different places.[3]

Nyoro believe that there are several categories of these spirits, but the most important are the ghosts left by dead people (*mizimu*), and the broader category of individualized ' powers ' called *mbandwa*. In this article I am concerned only with the latter category, and especially with the pantheon of Cwezi spirits, the cult of which may be said to have constituted the traditional religion of Bunyoro.

For present-day Nyoro the term *Cwezi* has three distinct but con-

† I carried out field research in Bunyoro at intervals during the years 1951–5. It was mostly financed by the Treasury Committee for Studentships in Foreign Languages and Cultures, whose support I gratefully acknowledge.

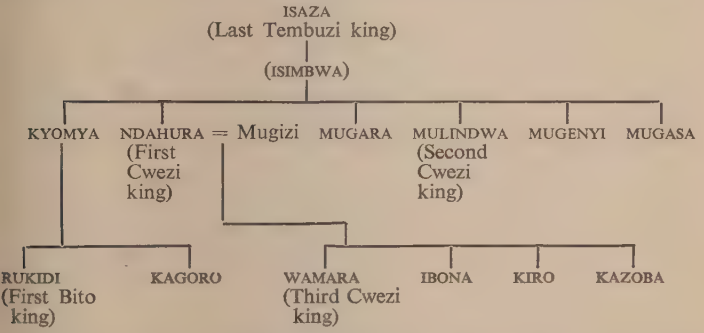
nected meanings. First, throughout most of the interlacustrine area the Cwezi are supposed to have been a wonderful race of people who came to Bunyoro many generations ago from the north or north-east,[4] ruled the country for a couple of generations, and then mysteriously disappeared. They are said to have been very light-complexioned, and to have possessed marvellous skills and miraculous powers. But Nyoro also use the term *Cwezi* in a more restricted sense, and one not (to us) compatible with the first. It may refer to a small group of rulers, believed to be genealogically linked in the male line to the dynasty which preceded them (the Tembuzi) as well as to the Bito who succeeded them, and to the women-folk and dependants of these rulers. We need not, in the present context, conjecture about the validity or otherwise of these putative genealogical links; it is sufficient to note that in Bunyoro, where hereditarily ascribed status is of high importance, this linking of the present dynasty, the Bito, with the illustrious and semi-mythical Cwezi, and through them with the shadowy Tembuzi and so with the very beginnings of the world, must have been greatly enhancing to Bito prestige and authority. It is said that when the Cwezi vanished from the country they left behind them a cult of spirit mediumship of which they themselves were the objects, thus bequeathing to the Nyoro people a permanent means of access to the magical wisdom and power which they represented. This, then, provides the third meaning of the word *Cwezi*; it denotes a pantheon of contemporarily effective spirits, each terminologically identified with one of the long-dead if not mythical Cwezi, and each possessing its own individuality and special competence. These spirits are not thought of as the ghosts of real men who died long ago, but rather as unchanging, 'timeless' powers; the term *muzimu* is not applied to them. Still less is the *mbandwa* cult of Cwezi spirits any kind of ancestral cult. Nyoro never speak of themselves as being the 'children' of the Cwezi, though they might, when concerned with royal origins, speak of the ruling Bito as being so. The quasi-mythical Cwezi were rulers, not ancestors, and the Cwezi spirits which possess people today are independent spiritual powers, and not ghosts.[5]

It is generally said that there are nineteen of these Cwezi spirits; the names of the more important of them are well known to all Nyoro, though there is some uncertainty about the names of some lesser ones, whose genealogical or social connections with the 'great' Cwezi are sometimes unknown or disputed. But I do not think that many of the names in the following list would be seriously disputed, though the relative statuses of some of them might be. After the name of each Cwezi spirit I have given (where I know it) the *mpako* or praise name by which it is known and addressed. One of these dozen or so names, which are thought to be of Nilotic origin, are given to every Nyoro in infancy, and their use implies both respect and intimacy.[6] 'F' indicates female spirits; these are

associated with wives and slave girls of the Cwezi rulers and their agnates.

'Great' Cwezi *mbandwa*		Minor Cwezi *mbandwa*		
Rubanga	(Amoti)	Mugasa	(Aboki)	
Ndahura	(Akiiki)	Kahuka	(Amoti)	
Mulindwa	(Adyeri)	Ibona		
Wamara	(Akiiki)	Kiro		
Mugenyi		Kazoba		
Kagoro	(Arali)	Kalisa		
Kyomya	(Amoti)	Mugara		
Nyabuzana	(Adyeri) F.	Rukohe	(Aboki)	F.
		Kagole	(Atwoki)	F.
		Mugizi	(Atenyi)	F.
		Kazini	(Amoti)	F.
		Kaikara		F.

It is possible to place some of the better-known of these Cwezi on a genealogical chart, and the chart here given indicates also the putative link, already referred to, between the present Bito dynasty and the Cwezi, and through them with the Tembuzi.[7]



These nineteen or so Cwezi spirits are known as the white or 'pure' *mbandwa* (*mbandwa ezera*) in opposition to the black *mbandwa* (*mbandwa eziragura*), which are all the other spirits by which people may be possessed, of which there are now a great number. In many cultural contexts the colour white signifies for Nyoro, as for many other peoples, purity, auspiciousness, happiness, goodness, and so on. All, or most, of these 'white' *mbandwa* are concerned with fertility, and with people's well-being generally, and for most people the main object of the traditional cult was to cause them to have children (*kuzaza*). Even today many children are given the personal names *Byembandwa* or *Byabacwezi*, indicating that they owe their birth to the mediation of these spirits. Many Nyoro attribute the determined attempts of the Christian Missions and the Government to stamp out the *mbandwa* cult to the Europeans' desire to prevent them from having children, to the end that the Nyoro people might die out altogether.

But as well as this general concern, of which more is said below, some Cwezi are said to have specific spheres of influence. Thus Rubanga, usually regarded as the most important and powerful Cwezi (in 1955 initiation cost £30, plus incidental expenses), is especially concerned with twins and other forms of unusual or abnormal birth, and also with household matters generally. It is also associated with thunder.[8] Kagoro is concerned with lightning, and a man killed by lightning must be buried by a medium (*kibandwa*) of Kagoro; otherwise, it is said, lightning will strike the grave and disinter the body. The proper sacrifice for Kagoro is a white fowl, and a white fowl is said to appear mysteriously when lightning strikes. Nyabuzana, the most powerful of the female *mbandwa*, is concerned with travelling and journeys, as well as with childbirth and human well-being generally, like the other Cwezi. Wamara is associated with rain. Kalisa is said to have been Kagoro's herdsman, and is associated with cattle (*kulisa* means to graze cattle). Also, every Cwezi spirit has its appropriate headdress and regalia, worn by mediums and initiates at possession ceremonies. Each (except for a few *mbandwa* which do not have huts)[9] has its own type of spirit hut (*kibali*), made in a special shape and of particular kinds of wood. And each has its proper sacrifice, and its own songs, sung when it is being invoked.

There is a loose association between particular Cwezi spirits and particular clans. Nyoro clans are categories rather than corporate groups, and every Nyoro belongs to one or other of them by birth. They number about 150; they are patrilineal, exogamous and totemic, and they are widely dispersed throughout Bunyoro, and, extensively, throughout the interlacustrine Bantu area.[10] For every clan there is one or, sometimes, two Cwezi spirits with which persons belonging to that clan may, as members of small agnatically-based local groups, enter into a special relationship. There is no one-to-one correlation; evidently a number of different clans can be associated with the same *mbandwa* spirit or spirits. Thus in Bunyoro members of the Abasingo clan are associated in this way with the Cwezi spirits Kyomya and Rubanga, Abasaiga are associated with Kyomya, Abagonya with Kagoro, and so on. Also, members of these clans can be, and are, possessed by other Cwezi spirits. But it is only with the spirits traditionally associated with his clan that a person can enter into the specifically ' group ' relationship with which we are concerned. If a man enters into a mediumistic relationship with *mbandwa* spirits other than those specially associated with his clan, he does so as an individual, and not on behalf of any kind of social group. This distinction will become plainer later. Again, I cannot say with certainty whether the same clans are associated with the same Cwezi spirits throughout the interlacustrine area; but so far as my information goes this is the case in Bunyoro.

There are negative as well as positive correlations between clan

membership and spirit mediumship. Members of certain clans may not in any circumstances enter into mediumistic relationship with certain Cwezi spirits. Thus Abasingo may not be possessed by the Cwezi Mulindwa. The reason for this lies in Nyoro traditional history; it is recorded that a woman of the Abasingo clan attempted to kill Mulindwa, being jealous because he was more handsome than her own son.[11] For this crime Abasingo are for ever excluded from the benefits of possession by the *mbandwa* spirit Mulindwa. It is worth noting here the clear implication that the traditional possession cult benefits its practitioners; Abasingo's exclusion from the cult of Mulindwa is regarded as a deprivation. There are, also, a few clans in which only men, or only women, may participate in the possession cult, and one clan, the royal Bito clan, is not supposed to participate in it at all. But in most clans both men and women may become mediums. In fact it is said that 'group' mediums were more commonly women than men. There is now no way of verifying this, but it is certainly said nowadays that women are more involved in all forms of spirit possession than men are.[12]

The association between particular clans and particular Cwezi spirits was socially significant in the context of the small, agnatically based local groups in which the Nyoro community was traditionally organized. The traditional group cult was not a clan or lineage cult (except in the sense that fellow-clansmen, even though lacking any sort of social contact with each other, were concerned with the same Cwezi spirit or spirits); it was essentially the concern of the extended family group or household (*eka*, plural *amaka*). All Nyoro say that in former times *amaka* were much larger than they are now, and we may suppose that a large *eka* might, typically, have consisted of the household head (*nyineka*), his wives, his sons and their wives, and the unmarried daughters of the household, together with a few attached relatives, dependants, and household slaves. Nowadays the typical *eka* is very much smaller, usually little more than a simple or compound family of spouses and children, but some sons still bring their wives home to live patrilocally, and it is still an important Nyoro value that grown sons should continue to live together in their father's *eka*, and some do.

One, and only one, member of this group (who might, depending on the restrictions imposed in his or her clan, be either male or female) was the accredited medium of the Cwezi spirit or spirits associated with the clan to which the male members of the group belonged. This spirit was called the *mbandwa* or *mucwezi w'eka*, the 'household spirit', and this term is applied generally to all the white or Cwezi *mbandwa*, to distinguish them from the black or non-Cwezi *mbandwa* spirits, which do not and cannot have this group significance.

Through this association with a particular Cwezi spirit or spirits, the health, prosperity, and especially the fertility of the local domestic

group is assured. On such important occasions as the birth or marriage of one of its members, or (probably most usually) when a diviner declares that an illness in the group is due to the *mbandwa y'eka*, which is said to feel itself neglected and to 'want to eat', a mediumistic seance is held, attended by all the members of the group, and also by other mediums of the same and other *mbandwa* from neighbouring homesteads. Such a seance might take place two or three times a year, according to informants, or it might not occur more than once in five years. In the course of this seance the spirit 'climbs into the head' (*kutemba ha mutwe*) of the medium, and through him or her—now in a state of real or simulated dissociation—communicates with the people present. A sacrificial meal has been prepared, and the Cwezi spirit eats of this (through the person of its medium), and distributes some of the food, usually millet porridge (*oburo*) but sometimes meat and certain vegetable dishes, to those present. This it may do by moulding little pellets of porridge in its fingers, spitting lightly on them to convey its blessing, and putting them in the mouths of anyone who is near. Feeding another person by putting pieces of food in his or her mouth in this manner is called *kubegera*, and, as a kind of epitome of commensality, it signifies a very close attachment. A special blessing is also conveyed by the recipient of the blessing seating himself or herself, facing forwards, on the medium's lap; this is called *kubembera*, and also signifies very close affection, like that between mother and child.[13] The spirit may also convey its blessing, through the medium, by spitting on the head of the person blessed —it should be done on the *top* of the head; there is a saying that a *mbandwa* who wishes you ill will spit on the nape of your neck (*mbandwa akunobere akucwa hangoto*)—and in the cupped hands of the recipient, who then wipes the spittle on his face, chest and arms. A 'household' medium would bless a newly married couple coming into the house in this way, saying: 'have children, increase, receive property, grow rich' (*muzale*, *mukanye*, *mutunge*, *mugaigahale*).

I do not here give a detailed account of a spirit seance; I hope to do this elsewhere. But enough has been said, I hope, to show that the white *mbandwa* cult in its traditional form is regarded as essentially beneficent; its purpose is to convey blessing and prosperity to the members of the group. Nyoro say that the white Cwezi *mbandwa* spirits 'come to purify (literally "to whiten") the house, and to give it blessing' (*baizire okweza enju n'okugiha omugisa*). And when the spirit has 'climbed into the head' of the medium the head of the house, or some other member of the household, addresses it in some such terms as these: 'I have cooked food for you; eat it, and make us bear children' (*nkucumbire olire otuhe oruzaro*). Another form of words is: 'Give me a blessing. I want to obtain riches; give me a wife, goats and cattle; let my cultivation be successful; let me get plenty of food and also cotton and tobacco, so that I may have everything.' The supplicant then sits on the lap

of the medium. But prayers may be addressed to the white *mbandwa* spirits collectively at any time. without possession taking place; at any time of crisis a man may say 'O nineteen Bacwezi, help me!' (*mbandwa ikumi n'omwenda munjune*).

A Nyoro author wrote of the cult: 'spirit possession was a kind of worship and prayer, a way of thanking God and asking him for things. Men's prayers passed through the *mbandwa* spirits just as today we ask the saints to pass our requests to God the Father.' [14] Although this statement reflects its author's Christian upbringing, it is plain from it and from what has been said above that the Cwezi 'group' cult is thought of as good rather than evil, a means of entering into a satisfactory relationship with powerful spiritual forces, and of acquiring their blessing and good will. It is worth noting, also, that the relationship is thought of as a reciprocal one; the Cwezi spirits are spoken of as 'being hungry', 'wanting to eat', and 'requiring' a medium through whom to manifest themselves: men are thought to be dependent on the good will of the *mbandwa* spirits, but the spirits themselves are seen as dependent on men for the means to express themselves, and for the services and respect which they need. And it is said that men are not without the means of retaliation against an ineffectual *mbandwa*.

'If a man with a certain *mbandwa* dies far away, the people of his house are angry with that *mbandwa* and refuse to cook for it. They say: "eee, eee; if you want to eat, go off and look for someone else to possess; you failed to take proper care of your person and he has died far away" (*eee, eee; obuwagonzaga okulya, omuntu wawe nk'otamulinzire kurungi kandi kakagwa, omumahanga, genda wenka oweserurre omuntu ondi akubandwa*).'

The association of the traditional Cwezi cult with goodness and auspiciousness is also shown in other ways. Ideally, 'group' mediums should be initiated into cult membership as young and innocent children, preferably at the age of twelve or thirteen. Older people may be initiated (and age is no bar to initiation into the numerous 'black' *mbandwa* cults), but it may be dangerous for them. There is a Nyoro saying that if you initiate an old person into the spirit cult he or she will be dead by the next morning (*embandwa ogitendeka omuntu mukuru ngu nyenkya aihire orufunjo*—literally 'you initiate someone who is old and the next morning he has plucked the papyrus stem'). Also, particular stress is laid on the necessity for the initiate to be gentle and well-behaved (*muculezi*); a rude and uncouth child is not acceptable. The status of the group or household medium is, furthermore, a highly honorific one; informants say that even the household head, whose authority over the group is unquestioned in all other matters, must treat the medium with respect at all times, even when he or she is still a child. I have been told of household heads who have suffered illness or other misfortune because they have offended the household medium. It is significant that a special name is given to a female household

or family medium (a male one is simply called *kibandwa* or *mucwezi w'eka*), she is called *Nyakatagara*. This is said to be derived from a verb *okutagara*, meaning ' to be free to do what one likes, to be privileged '. The etymology may be dubious, but the implications are plain.

The household medium, whether male or female, may never move permanently from the homestead with which he or she is associated. This, in effect, means that a female *mubandwa w'eka* cannot marry for bridewealth, and some of the few cases of uxorilocal marriage (not, for Nyoro, ' marriage ' at all) of which I have record are attributed to this cause.

A person could be chosen as *kibandwa w'eka* or *nyakatagara* in various ways. In theory the selection was made by the Cwezi spirit itself. The choice might be revealed by a diviner, or it might be made known, during a seance, by one or other of the mediums present sitting on the chosen person's lap. The spirit's choice might be revealed in dreams, either to the household head or to another member of it, or it might show its wishes by causing the selected person to behave oddly, to wander about in the bush by himself, or to become ill. This last is said to be the commonest method; the *mbandwa w'eka* may often be neglected until someone in the household falls ill. Then the diviners are likely to reveal that the illness is due to this neglect, or, perhaps, to the failure to find a successor to a deceased ' group ' medium. Sometimes, nowadays, a boy or girl at school may be chosen by one or other of these means to become a medium in the spirit cult. Often the child is most unwilling, both because he has been taught at school that the cult, in all its forms, is a thing of Satan, and because he knows that initiation is an arduous and frightening business. This situation sometimes leads to domestic stress, and I have heard of children who have run away and hidden in the bush, or escaped to distant relatives, in order to avoid being forcibly seized and initiated by members of their family. Usually, however, the conflict is less dramatic; the following account by an informant is typical:

' My mother's brother's family had great difficulty about finding an heir for their household medium (*nyakatagara*). It was a big household, and the medium was my grandfather's sister, who was very old. Everyone in the household feared her very much, and when any children of the family married they went to her for a blessing. After my mother's brother married he had a daughter, who very closely resembled her great-aunt, the *nyakatagara*. This child behaved very oddly, trying to wash her mother as though their roles were reversed, helping others to food before herself, and otherwise behaving in a grown-up way. The old grand-aunt wanted the girl to be her heir as household medium, but the girl's father refused, as he was a Christian, and did not want the child to be turned into a heathen. So the girl grew up, but she was ill a good deal, and though she got married she did not have any children. One day

a niece of the old lady (who had died some time before) came and had a long talk with the girl, and explained to her that she had been chosen to be *nyakatagara* as heir to her grandmother, and that this was probably the reason for her bad luck. However, the girl refused to be initiated. In consequence, many members of the family became ill, lost their jobs, and suffered other misfortunes. In particular, my mother's brother suffered greatly; members of his family died, so did his goats, and his house was burned down. He had another woman in the family initiated, but it did not do any good.'

No one can become an accredited medium in the *mbandwa* cult without undergoing a complicated and expensive process of initiation, which requires the participation of several already established mediums, and may occupy several days. I have given some account elsewhere of the initiation rites (1957A); here it is sufficient to say that the ritual culminates in the manifestation of symptoms of possession by the initiate and others, after a state of actual or simulated dissociation has been achieved through the rhythmic deployment of songs, drums and gourd rattles. A principal theme of the ritual is the initiate's drastic change of status; there is a vivid symbolic enactment of death and rebirth, and for a time the novice is in a state of grave ritual danger, the relief of which requires the performance of special rites. Through initiation the candidate becomes a member of the confraternity of spirit mediums, and I turn now to consider this 'guild' aspect of the traditional spirit cult.

II

Although nowadays, owing to Government and missionary repression, the spirit possession cult in Bunyoro is a clandestine, even furtive, affair, there is no doubt that in pre-European times members of the cult did form recognized groups or corporations. Informants say that in the old days, when cult members or *babandwa* were assembled for a possession ceremony and feast, they used to rush around the village stealing things and 'catching' people (presumably with the intention of initiating them, for a price, into cult membership). This corporate aspect of the traditional Cwezi cult is interestingly corroborated by one of the first two Europeans to visit Bunyoro, just a hundred years ago. In his account of his journey, Grant describes (1864, pp. 292–3):

'A class of mendicants or gentle beggars called "Bandwa", allied to the Wichwezee . . . They adorn themselves with more beads, bells, brass, and curiosities than any other race, and generally carry an ornamented tree-creeper in their hands. Many of their women look handsome and captivating when dressed up in variously-coloured skins, and wearing a small turban of bark-cloth. One man amongst them wore, from the crown of his head down his back, the skin of a tippet-monkey, to which he had attached the

horns of an antelope. They wander from house to house singing; and are occasionally rather importunate beggars, refusing to leave without some present. A set of them lived near us at Unyoro, and seemed to have cattle of their own, so that they do not entirely depend upon begging for subsistence. The natives all respect them very much, never refusing them food when they call, and treating them as religious devotees. Anyone may join their number by attending to certain forms; and the family of a Bandwa does not necessarily follow the same occupation. I knew one of them the captain of a band of soldiers. This whole country was once occupied by people of this class, called Wichwezee, who, according to tradition, suddenly disappeared underground!'

And nearly twenty years later, Emin Pasha (1888, p. 285) recorded his impression of the *mbandwa* mediums at the headquarters of the dissident Bito princes whom he visited (it is interesting to note that on this occasion the *babandwa* were evidently predominantly women):

'The most striking figures among the crowds of people loitering about here were the Wichwezi sorceresses, a large number of whom are found at the court of every Wawitu [Bito, J.B.] prince. Clothed in bark cloths, yellowish brown or dyed black . . . so that the whole body is covered, they also not infrequently wear skins of goats or sheep, and occasionally cheetah or otter (*Lutra* sp., Nyonge) skins, and adorn or disfigure their heads with objects of every conceivable description. These ladies are certainly not beautiful, and they would hardly be eligible for vestal virgins, but they are feared, and therefore venture to take many liberties. As is always the case where professional interests are concerned, they vie with one another in eccentricities. One at Rionga's court grunted every minute; at Anfina's, one of them spoke in the highest falsetto, while another sat down beside one of the company, and wanted her shoulders rubbed and her head bent. But there was a man who surpassed them all; he was apparently quite deaf, and chattered about all sorts of stupid things, giving no answers to questions, but leaving off as soon as anyone whistled.'

Neither of these observers seems to have understood that the central concern of the 'Bandwa' or 'Wichwezi sorceresses' was with spirit possession (though this concern is plain from the description of their behaviour at the end of Emin's account). But it is plain from these early observations that in those days cult members did form a separate and distinctive social group, and that there was nothing secretive or clandestine about some at least of their cult activities; indeed they evidently courted rather than shunned publicity. The case is very much otherwise today; to be seen nowadays adorned with 'beads, bells, brass and curiosities' would be to invite prosecution under the Witchcraft Ordinance in the Native Courts. But even today cult members or *babandwa* are thought of as being in some ways different from and set apart from ordinary people; they acknowledge at least an informal ranking between

themselves, and membership in the cult implies definite rights and obligations expressive of mutual solidarity and support. In this section I discuss these 'societal' aspects of the cult.

Even in traditional times the spirit cult concerned more people than the household mediums or *babandwa b'eka*, and it was concerned with more spirits than the Cwezi spirits. Though there could only be one *mubandwa w'eka* to a household or extended family, other members of the household could be possessed by other spirits and initiated into the spirit cult, and undoubtedly many were. For many kinds of black, non-Cwezi spirits were current in traditional times (and they have, as we shall see, proliferated greatly in recent years), to say nothing of the ghosts of the dead (*mizimu*), which were and still are dealt with through the technique of possession. Also, household mediums could be possessed by spirits other than the Cwezi spirits which were their particular concern; it seems probable that most mediums, then as now, would have stood in a mediumistic relationship with a number of *mbandwa* spirits. The black *mbandwa*, unlike the Cwezi, are believed to be of foreign and relatively recent origin—many of the older ones are said to have come from the neighbouring countries of Lango and Buganda —and some are said to be very powerful. Some of them, unlike the Cwezi, could be used for purposes of divination, and some for sorcery; I shall return to these aspects later. But it is probable that in the majority of cases, in traditional times as at the present day, recourse to *mbandwa* possession was a response to illness or misfortune, undertaken after consultation with and on the advice of the diviners (*bafumu*).

Thus there is evidence that even in traditional times, as well as the 'group' mediums or *babandwa b'eka* there existed a body of professional or semi-professional mediums. This is plain from the reports of Grant and Emin Pasha, as well as from my own enquiries in the field. No initiation, whether into the Cwezi group cult or into the cult of the black *mbandwa*, could take place without the participation and direction of these 'experts', and this is still the case today. Though nowadays few, if any, 'professionals' work full time,[15] it is still well known in any neighbourhood who the senior *babandwa* (called *basegu*) in the area are, although it may be extremely difficult for a stranger to find out. I was told that there were usually one or two such men—even though women predominate among cult members the *basegu* are invariably men—to a settlement area (*kyaro*) of approximately fifty households. These men are much respected and feared; they are said to be experts in sorcery and poisons, and stories are current of indiscreet initiates who have told the secrets of the cult to outsiders, and who have been killed by *basegu*, their bodies buried in the bush, and their relatives told that they have been taken by their *mbandwa* to another country. Each *musegu* has three or four assistants, of both sexes, who help him in initiation ceremonial; the most junior of these is

called *ow'ensaho*, ' bag-carrier ' or ' bagman ', since it is his job to carry the skin or barkcloth pouch containing the *mbandwa* emblems and insignia (headdresses, gourd rattle, etc.).

The distinctiveness of the *babandwa* and their separateness from ordinary people is strongly stressed. The *rite de passage* aspect of initiation is marked by the physical removal of initiates to the bush, away from habitations, and by the ceremonial enactment of death and rebirth. The long ritual sequence admits the candidate to a social and spiritual status inaccessible to laymen (called *abalimwoyo*), and the difference is further stressed by their exclusion from the more esoteric of the rituals. It is further reinforced by the vow of secrecy which is impressed on initiates by the most formidable threats of what will happen to them if they disclose what they have seen and heard.[16]

Reference has already been made to the distinctive dress, ornaments and emblems of mediums. These include barkcloth robes, skin or barkcloth headdresses decorated with beads, cowry shells, coins and other objects, including, sometimes, animal horns (the material and design of these headdresses and their ornamentation varies with the particular *mbandwa* being mediated), mantles of skin, especially that of the vivid black and white colobus monkey, necklaces made of cowries, beads, seeds, and pieces of various species of wood, and sticks of various shapes and sizes. The medium carries a rattle (*nyege*) made from a small, pear-shaped gourd, containing the hard seeds of a wild lily. All these regalia create a strikingly impressive effect and the wearer assumes a very weird and arresting appearance. These paraphernalia are regarded by laymen with a good deal of awe; many Nyoro were reluctant to touch such *mbandwa* regalia as came into my hands.

Cult distinctiveness is also expressed in specific *mbandwa* songs, sung when spirits are being evoked. One or two of the better-known refrains were given in my earlier article (1957A, p. 153), but some songs 'belong to' particular Cwezi (and other) spirits; I have included some Cwezi ones as Appendix I. These songs are sung to the rhythmic accompaniment of the mediums' gourd rattles, and were formerly accompanied also by the beating of small drums (*ntimba*). The actual singing includes a good deal of humming (with the mouth shut) and yodelling, in tune, between the verbal phrases. It is said that it would be dangerous for an uninitiated person to sing a *mbandwa* song, for it might cause the spirit concerned to ' seize ' the singer, which could make him ill or even kill him.

Finally, the exclusive and ' secret society ' aspect of *mbandwa* cult membership is strikingly expressed by the use of a peculiar *mbandwa* vocabulary, which initiates have to learn in the course of the initiation period (*kutendeka*), and which is used by mediums when they are in a state of possession, or when laymen are present. Some of these words appear to be ordinary Lunyoro words mis-

applied or inverted, and a few are found in other languages of the area, but most defy any kind of etymological analysis. A list of the ' Cwezi ' words I recorded, with Lunyoro and English equivalents, is given as Appendix II. The diction of possessed mediums varies according to the character of the possessing spirit, but, as Emin Pasha noted, a high falsetto is usual, and there is a good deal of humming and grunting.[17]

It is plain, then, that mediums think of themselves, and are thought of by others, as *different* from ordinary people, and this difference is culturally stressed in a number of ways. It remains, in this section, to consider the kinds of attitudes and obligations which mediums exhibit and acknowledge towards one another; the extent, that is, to which they regard themselves as forming a corporation or ' secret society '.

It is clear from certain aspects of the initiation ritual that initiation is into a *group*, and not merely into a particular social category. Thus solidarity between cult members is expressed by the use of kinship terms between them, both during initiation and afterwards. The initiate calls the mediums present at his initiation ' mothers ' (*nyina*), and the senior of them ' grandmother ' (*nyinenkuru*), regardless of sex, while the officiating mediums refer to the initiate as their ' child ' (*mwana*). (For Nyoro there is nothing absurd in men being ' grandmothers '; father's mother's brother and mother's mother's brother are so called in Nyoro kinship terminology—Beattie, 1957B, p. 338). The use of the terms of uterine kinship in the present context no doubt stresses the ' rebirth ' aspect of initiation, but it also emphasizes the close bond which cult membership creates between the new *mubandwa* and his or her senior colleagues. The same sort of bond is expressed in the custom of mediums feeding one another with morsels of food (*kubegera*), and sitting on one another's laps (*kubukara*); both usages imply the closest kind of dependency and mutual affection, as between mother and child.

The analogy explicitly drawn between initiation into the *mbandwa* cult and marriage further emphasizes the initiate's assumption of new kinds of obligations (and rights) in a new context of social relationships. The initiate, whether male or female, may be referred to as a ' bride ' (*mugole*), and, like a bride, he or she must remain in seclusion for three or four days after the initiation rites have been concluded. The main payment to the initiators, which may amount to several hundred shillings, is sometimes called ' the spirit's bridewealth ' (*mukago gw'embandwa*), further stressing the analogy with marriage—a little ambiguously, as of course the bridewealth comes from the bridegroom's and not from the bride's side. But the analogy stresses the group obligations assumed in marriage, and these obligations, though not identical in each case, are assumed by both spouses. It is worth noting that in the *mbandwa* vocabulary the words used for ' father ' and ' mother ' are *sozara* and *nyinazara*, terms which in everyday Lunyoro apply to ' spouse's father ' and

' spouse's mother ', and which to all Nyoro connote a special kind of respect and obligation (Beattie, 1958), p. 15. As in marriage, obligations are assumed not only to one's ' spouse ' (a particular *mbandwa* spirit or its medium), but also and most importantly to one's spouse's senior relatives. As a husband is required to show respect towards his wife's parents and to take them gifts from time to time, so an *mbandwa* initiate is expected to maintain close and deferential contact with his seniors in the cult, especially with those who were concerned in his initiation. A personal experience recorded by one of my Nyoro research assistants illustrates this:

' My wife was punished by illness for neglecting her *mbandwa* (Cwezi) spirit. She had omitted to make periodic sacrifices to it for some years, and to keep her *mbandwa* regalia with her. And since our marriage she had omitted to visit her *nyinenkuru* (the senior woman officiant at her initiation). An initiate should do this periodically for the rest of her life, bringing small presents of cents and other things. She should sit on the older woman's lap and receive her blessing, and she should always treat her with great respect. Also, my wife should have invited her *nyinenkuru* to her house from time to time, and prepared a feast for her. I did not know about all this, as I did not even know that my wife was a *mbandwa*.

' One evening after cooking the evening meal my wife was suddenly taken ill [there follows a description of the nature of the illness; she apparently suffered a kind of fit, rushed out into the fields, and could only be restrained with great difficulty. A diviner was consulted, who diagnosed the trouble, provided medicine, and gave the following advice.] He told me that I should go and buy a goat to be dedicated to the *mbandwa* spirit, because the goat formerly dedicated had long ago been sold by my wife and she had omitted to replace it. I did this and, while the diviner, who was also a medium, begged the *mbandwa* to accept it, my wife had to bite on the goat's ear, so that the spirit might take possession of it through her. This goat is still in my flock. The diviner also told me that I should send my wife to her *nyinenkuru* so that she could pray at her spirit shrine (*kibali*) on my wife's behalf.

' Four days later I did as I had been instructed, giving my wife thirty shillings to take to her *nyinenkuru* to soften her heart (*kuru worobya mutima*), so that she might agree to take me on her lap again, as the custom of *babandwa* is. After all these things had been done, my wife became quite well again, and she has never since been affected in this way.'

It may, I think, safely be concluded that even today *babandwa* do recognize obligations among themselves which are not acknowledged to outsiders, and that they do see themselves as a distinct and exclusive group. Although they no longer roam conspicuously about the country in bands, claiming public acknowledgment, respect and tribute, as they did in Grant's and Emin Pasha's da

hey still act corporately in possession ceremonies and initiations, nd they still maintain special bonds with one another. And even oday some of them at least may be said to form a separate class of rofessionals or semi-professionals, travelling at least occasionally bout the country to direct or conduct ceremonies, and having their wn conventions, techniques, equipment and terminology.

III

I have now discussed Bunyoro's traditional spirit mediumship cult both in its relationship to the local domestic groups which formed the elements in Nyoro community structure, and in its aspect as a group or corporation of professional or semi-professional mediums. It remains to consider what has happened to this cult after more than half a century of European contact, mainly through the Protectorate administration and the Christian missions (in Bunyoro the Church Missionary Society or Native Anglican church, and the Roman Catholic White Fathers).

The first thing to note is that despite rigorous repression by both Government and missions, spirit possession is still widespread in Bunyoro, but its practice is now nocturnal, furtive and highly secret, a circumstance which of course adds to the difficulties of a European who would investigate it. Nyoro say that there is more spirit possession now than there ever was before.[18] We shall see later why this should be. But although after more than fifty years of European contact spirit possession has increased, the old group Cwezi cult has declined almost to the point of extinction. An ex-priest, a close associate of numerous converts to the revivalist and fundamentalist *balokole* ('the saved') section of the Native Anglican Church, estimated that while about 98 households in 100 (including Christian ones) have at least one medium, not more than three or four still follow the old *mucwezi w'eka* cult. This decline is a matter of concern to some older, still pagan Nyoro, who believe that the country's low birth rate and high infant mortality are due to the decline of the old Cwezi cult, a decline which they believe that the Europeans, in their own interests, have been concerned to foster.[19]

There are, in fact, many reasons for this decline. First, the large, extended family groups centred on a core of close agnates, which formed the traditional social unit at the community level, are no longer either so large or so important as they used to be. In the conditions of pre-European Bunyoro close solidarity and co-operation between agnates and the maintenance of a strong family structure were conditions of the individual's survival; nowadays the old interdependence has broken down, men's private interests no longer demand either practical or ritual collaboration, and it is increasingly possible for everybody to be self-sufficient. A man nowadays rarely lives in the same homestead as his fathers and brothers after he grows up and marries; although fraternal solidarity is still an

important Nyoro value, young men often build elsewhere in the area, or even move into other parts of the country or beyond. In a cash economy a man no longer depends on his father, the household head, for the satisfaction of his wants, for he can obtain money, whether to pay bridewealth for a wife or to buy himself a bicycle, either by raising and selling cotton and tobacco, or by obtaining paid employment in Buganda, if not nearer home. Women have achieved a similar emancipation, or are in process of achieving it. The support of a man's brothers or near agnates is no longer a condition of his physical security, as it was in traditional times; he can now travel the length and breadth of the country and beyond it without risk of involvement in blood feud or war. And, through education—practically all of Bunyoro's schools are Mission-run—the Missions have, perhaps, been more successful in repressing the old group cult (into which, it will be remembered, only children can be initiated) than in repressing the newer, more individualistic cults, which may be voluntarily entered by adults of any age.

But, despite the breakdown of the old group cult, men and women today have just as much need, perhaps more, for spiritual consolation and support, a need which, for the majority, the missions cannot as yet be said fully to meet. Illness and misfortune strike as they have always done, although they may assume different forms, and their explanation is sought, as it always has been, in the activity of spiritual agents of one kind or another. It is often said, and I believe that it is true in Bunyoro, that at least a temporary consequence of the breakdown of traditional values is an increase in insecurity and anxiety, with consequent increase in recourse to occult consolations.[20] In Bunyoro nowadays this usually takes the form of spirit possession, i.e. recourse to *mbandwa* spirits or ghosts. I do not here discuss the Nyoro ghost cult;[21] it is sufficient to say that it, too, is primarily (though not wholly) an individual matter. Diviners may diagnose illness or some other misfortune as due to the activity of a ghost (*muzimu*) left by some deceased relative or acquaintance whom, while still living, the victim offended or injured. The possession cult provides a means, indeed the only means, of dealing with the matter; through initiation the ghost may be induced to ' climb into the head ' of the affected person, to say what offended it, and to state what it wishes to be done.

Today a person who consults a diviner on account of illness or some other personal problem is likely to be told that his trouble is due to the activity of one or other of the now very numerous *mbandwa* spirits. Since initiation has to be paid for (costs vary, and some spirits demand larger ' fees ' than others; the range in 1955 was from about thirty or forty shillings to thirty pounds or more),[22] the cult provides a ready means of personal enrichment to mediums, often also diviners, who are *babandwa* for a number of the most commonly diagnosed *mbandwa* spirits. Nyoro are well aware of the extent to which exploitation by unscrupulous diviners

is possible; the anthropologist, and the sophisticated minority of Nyoro, would say that diviner-mediums 'manufacture' spirits in order to exploit the credulous minority, and even the unsophisticated assert that diviners commonly 'send' an *mbandwa* spirit to afflict a person, especially if he is well off, in order that they may make money by 'curing' him through initiation into the cult of the spirit concerned. 'A poor man is not initiated into the cult' (*omunaku tibamutendeka*), Nyoro say.

A sign of the times, also, is the *mbandwa* cult's increasing association with divination. Many *mbandwa* (but, significantly, none of the nineteen Cwezi) can act as oracles; when 'in the head' of its medium a spirit can answer questions put to it by clients. Typically such questions relate to sorcery suspects, but questions on any personal problem may be put, though the *mbandwa* will not always answer them [23] Now, in Bunyoro at least, divination serves the interests of individuals rather than groups, and Nyoro have a wide range of traditional techniques of divination which do not involve the mediation of spirits. Thus the present day association of the spirit cult with divination is an important aspect of its increased direction to individual rather than group ends. It is also, of course, a source of considerable profit to diviner-mediums.

Nyoro say that the increasing association of spirit mediumship with sorcery (which is said to have greatly increased in recent years) is also a sign of the times. I noted above the belief that some mediums can 'send' certain *mbandwa* to afflict people. They may, it is said, do this on their own account (as when they do so to make money by treating the victim through initiation into the cult of the spirit concerned), or, for payment, on behalf of a client who wishes to kill or injure an enemy. Only some of the newer *mbandwa* are thus associated with sorcery; the Cwezi spirits cannot be employed in this way. A characteristic case involved the *mbandwa* Kifaru (described below):

'A man wanted to marry a certain girl, but she refused. So he arranged with a medium-diviner (*mufumu*) to send Kifaru to that girl's house. Kifaru persecuted that girl very much, beating her with a stick, though invisible, and throwing large stones at her through the shut door of her house, with the intention of driving her mad. The girl, however, sought the help of another diviner, who caused Kifaru to return to the man who had sent it. He himself became mad for a while; he recovered, but was left with a permanent twist to his mouth. The girl married another man and lived happily ever after.'

It may, then, reasonably be concluded that within the past half century or so there has been a very greatly increased emphasis on the individualistic aspects of spirit possession, at the expense of the traditional group cult. This has been associated with a vast proliferation of the 'powers' mediated through the cult. Certainly some of the black *mbandwa* have been known in Bunyoro since

long before European times; the ghost cult is no doubt traditional, and ' possession ' by certain other forces, such as the magical horns (*mahembe*) used by sorcerers, may have occurred for generations. But the number of *mbandwa* is said to have increased greatly in recent years. At the present time a single individual may be a medium for a considerable number of *mbandwa* spirits, and Nyoro say that ' professional ' mediums are always adding to their repertoire. Such versatility enhances their prestige as *babandwa*, and it may, as we have noted, afford a source of profit.

In 1953 I interviewed eight women mediums who had recently been ' saved ' by conversion to the *Balokole* section of the Native Anglican Church, and who apparently felt no qualms in talking to me (for a consideration) about their former *mbandwa* spirits. On the average they had had fourteen *mbandwa* each, and one claimed to have been a medium for no less than forty-one spirits. I list these here in full, as a characteristic catalogue of the kinds of entities, both ancient and modern, currently ' spiritualized ' through the *mbandwa* cult. I have placed them in four categories, somewhat tentatively in some cases; traditional Cwezi, traditional black *mbandwa*, ' new ' (i.e. post-European) *mbandwa*, and a residual category of unidentified spirits:

(*a*) *Traditional ' Cwezi ':*

Kagoro
Nyabuzana

(*b*) *Traditional ' black ' ' mbandwa ':*

Irungu	the spirit of the bush, and so of hunting, also divines.
Nyinabarongo	' mother of twins.'
Kituli	a Nilotic *mbandwa*.
Aguda	from Chopi (Jopalwoo) country in northern bunyoro.
Nsindizi	same as above.
Tula	,, ,, ,,
Murangira	of Ganda origin: ' A prince of the Ganda royal house.'
Kiwanuka	of Ganda origin.
Kibubu	the *mbandwa* of dumbness (*kibubu*, a dumb person).
Nyakamadi	an *mbandwa* from the country of the Madi, in north-western Uganda.
Janyongo	a Nilotic *mbandwa*.
Nkidi	*mbandwa* of Bukidi, i.e. Acholi.
Kanyarwizi	a spirit associated with water.

(*c*) *New ' mbandwa ':*

Njungu	the *mbandwa* of ' Europeanness '.

Nswahili	the *mbandwa* of ' Swahiliness '—people of the East African coast.
Kidandi	an *mbandwa* associated with plague, and the bush.
Kapumpuli	associated with smallpox (Ganda *Kawumpuli*).
Musika	the *mbandwa* of earthquake (*musika*).
Dakitali	the *mbandwa* of European medicine (' doctor ').
Kakohoro	the *mbandwa* of coughing (*kohorra*, cough).
Rwasamainja	' stone-crusher '.
Nyarimarima	the *mbandwa* of cultivation (*lima*).
Nyambongoya	the *mbandwa* of ' gentlemanliness ' (' like the Bito '—the ruling clan in Bunyoro).
Mugegera asinda nalya	the *mbandwa* of feebleness (*mugera*, a weak man).
Kyeramagura kyabalaya	' white legs of Europeans '—another expression of ' Europeanness '.
Ndege	' aeroplane '.
Ndulu	the Nyoro alarm cry—a high-pitched ululation.
Serkali Keya	the *mbandwa* of the King's African Rifles (' soldier of the K.A.R.').
Ruhanga ndamusabaga buli kiro	' I shall pray to God every day ': the *mbandwa* of Christian worship.
Biharamunda	the *mbandwa* of dysentery.
W'illalahi	the *mbandwa* of Islam.
Nyakalaya	' European lady ': the feminine aspect of ' Europeanness '.

Unidentified ' mbandwa ':

Rutali, Kawona, Kisekuru, Katonda, Nyarura, Kibiniko, Gwa Nyamirimbi gulibokya (Nyamirimbi's fire will burn you), Kaingano-ingano kalibaita (Kaingano-ingano will kill you).

Among recent spirits formerly mediated by other members of this group of informants were:

Kagole, Kalisa, Nyabuzana, Mugara, Ndahura (Cwezi *mbandwa*); Kambeija, Ruzika, Holira, Luya, Kaponaga, Kitita (black Nilotic *mbandwa* from Chopi country), and

Kifaru	the *mbandwa* of military tanks, called *kifaru* from the Swahili word for rhinoceros.
Kyaberamuti	the *mbandwa* of two-wheeled carts or rickshaws.
Nubi	the *mbandwa* of the Banubi—Sudanese who settled in Uganda at the time of Baker, and who still maintain a settlement near Kampala.

Finally, mention must be made of Mpolandi; the spirit of ' Polishness '. This derives from the establishment in Bunyoro, during the last war, of a refugee camp for several hundred displaced Poles, an impressive, and more than a little ominous, phenomenon to Nyoro. There are other *mbandwa* spirits besides those listed above, but these are a sufficiently representative selection.

How are we to explain the extraordinary viability of the Nyoro spirit cult, and the vast proliferation of the spirits with which it is concerned? Instead of gradually dying out with the spread of Christian teaching, with education and with technological advance, it has expanded widely, and has readily adapted itself to the more individualistic way of life of modern times. The advent of a cash economy, the increase of individualism, and the avarice of spirit mediums do not, I believe, provide a complete answer. Most important of all, I think, is the cult's capacity to absorb into itself new and frightening forces, however unfamiliar. Even this is not the whole explanation; the cult's dramatic and cathartic aspects are also, I believe highly important, and I hope to consider these elsewhere. I wish now to stress that it is the very unfamiliarity and fearsomeness of these new powers which qualify them for adoption; what is well-known and can be controlled by practical, every-day techniques does not need to be dealt with through symbol and ritual on the spiritual plane.[24] We have noted that even the Cwezi are not merely hero-gods, some of them at least also represent certain elemental natural forces, powers which lie outside of man's ordinary control. These are things to be feared and propitiated, but in order to propitiate them they must be conceived as in some sense living, autonomous beings, with whom some sort of communication can be established. Thus represented, they can be come to terms with, and perhaps conciliated, by means of procedures which are sanctioned by tradition, and of which the principles are understood by everybody.

But although the forces which are thus given spiritual form and so rendered comprehensible and approachable are thus individualized and to some extent ' humanized ', they still remain abstract forces, not a kind of ' people '. They are wholly immaterial, and, as we have seen, they are thought of as somehow diffused through space, at the same time nowhere and everywhere. They are not, like European ghosts, imagined as capable sometimes of assuming tangible, or at least visible, form. Thus Kifaru is not the ghost or manifestation of any particular tank, but rather the essence of all tanks, ' tankness ', with all the formidability and power that this implies. It is significant that the name of the *mbandwa* Njungu, for example, is in the grammatical noun class appropriate to things, (' n- '), not people (' mu- ', ' ba- '): what it denotes is ' *Europeanness* ', not ' European ' or ' Europeans ', the terms for whom would be *Mujungu* and *Bajungu*. It is the same with Mpolandi, Nswahili, and so on; what is being indicated is not something which can be

referred to as 'he' or 'they', but 'it'. It is true that a medium possessed by the spirit Njungu assumes what are supposed to be the language, dress, character and gestures of a European, but the *mbandwa* by which he purports to be possessed is no European in particular; it is rather the generalized power in virtue of which Europeans are what they are.

The functional effectiveness of the cult as thus adapted is plain. The disastrous consequences of a smallpox epidemic; the mysterious power of western medicine, the military and political domination of Europeans (at least up to very recent times); these are seen to be inimical and dangerous things. No doubt they would be less so if they were understood in wholly rational terms, and dealt with accordingly, but peasant Nyoro are not yet equipped for this kind of understanding. None the less, these intimidating forces exist and cannot be wished away, and the pre-existing, though now greatly altered, spirit medium cult provides a method of dealing with them. Nyoro peasants cannot readily come to easy and familiar terms with, for example, such real flesh-and-blood Europeans as the district and provincial officials; powerful and important as these remote figures are, they live in a world to which ordinary Nyoro have no access. But through the *mbandwa* cult Nyoro can assimilate them into the familiar dimension of their own culture, and here these powerful alien forces can be comprehended and manipulated.

At the same time, and by the same means, further characters are added to the *dramatis personæ* of a performance through which feelings of frustration, resentment and strain are directed into traditionally acceptable channels. A spirit seance has a markedly dramatic quality, and its cathartic effect on the participants can hardly be doubted. This is a theme which I hope to treat elsewhere,[25] but it may be noted here that the elimination of these cult practices in the present stage of Bunyoro's cultural and technological advancement might well result in the redirection of the impulses which they relieve into less desirable channels.

However this may be, I hope I have shown that the Nyoro spirit medium cult has both been radically affected by, and at the same time has adapted itself to, the winds of contemporary social change. The breakdown of the old lineage and domestic ties, the advent of a cash economy, the superimposition of a European administration on the traditional kingdom, and the activities of European missionaries, have brought about a growing individualism, and have led to the decline of the old group *mbandwa* cult. But the forces with which the cult provided a means of dealing have not vanished, rather they have changed, multiplied and intensified, and in the Nyoro world view this has involved the proliferation of new kinds of spirits. This potentially dangerous situation is not without cure; the traditional cult has provided ready to hand, a means of coming to terms with these new powers. It is a sign of the times that the new spirits which have emerged have been associated, not with the

traditional household cults, but rather with the fortunes and misfortunes of individuals, with divination, and with the inter-personal rivalries and hostilities which are the matrix of sorcery.

NOTES

[1] Following Firth, I use *spirit mediumship* (as distinct from *spirit possession* and *shamanism*) to refer to 'a form of possession in which the person is conceived as serving as an intermediary between spirits and men' (Firth, 1959, p. 141).

[2] Beattie (1957A).

[3] Swahili use the same term, *upepo*, for both wind and spirit.

[4] The orthodox view is that they came from Ethiopia or the Middle East. One contemporary writer suggests that they may have been Portuguese (Nyakatura, 1947, p. 28). Crazzolara claims that they were Nilotes, like their Bito successors (Crazzolara, 1950, Chap. 23), but there is little if any evidence for this. And it has recently been suggested that they never really existed at all, but are simply personifications of certain natural forces, analogous with the earlier Greek gods (Wrigley, 1958, pp. 11–17). Certainly, as we shall see, some of them are this, whatever their historical status.

[5] There is a cult of ghosts in Bunyoro, and mediums may be and sometimes are possessed by them (cf. Beattie, 1960, pp. 75–7). But Nyoro think of the Cwezi *mbandwa* cult, and not the ghost cult, as the traditional religion of the country.

[6] Cf. Crazzolara (1950), pp. 97–9.

[7] The best detailed account in English of Nyoro myth and traditional history is to be found in Fisher (1911). The genealogical information given here derives from her, also from Bikunya (1927), Nyakatura (1947), K.W. (1935), and from my own enquiries.

[8] Rubanga is said to be very fierce (*eina ekiniga ky'amani muno*), and able to kill quickly, even though 'white'. There is a saying that only a strong man can be a medium for Rubanga (*Ayomire abandwa Rubanga*), for a weakling could not endure so strong a spirit. An initiate is said to run wild in the hills like a madman for nine days, striking anyone he meets, living on berries, and impervious to hunger, weather, thorns and discomfort.

[9] Nyabuzana, for example, has no hut, but 'stays at the hearth because she is a woman' (*aikara ka ihiga kuba mukazi*).

[10] For some account of Nyoro clans, cf. Beattie (1957B).

[11] Cf. Fisher (1911), pp. 99–101.

[12] Nyoro say that this is because *kubandwa* is principally associated with childbirth, and this is a matter of even greater concern to women than it is to men. It is also possible that in a culture where women occupy a socially inferior status, membership of the cult may afford them a measure of power and prestige not readily accessible to them by other means. On this point cf. Leiris (1958), p. 102 and *passim*.

[13] Another occasion on which there is a formal sitting on another person's lap is when a bride leaves her parents' house and is received into her new home; she sits on the laps of both her parents before leaving, and on the laps of her husband's parents after she reaches his house.

[14] *Okubandwa kwabaga kuramya n'okugiza okusima n'okusaba Rubanga. Nibiraba omu Mbandwa nk'oku hati tusaba abarukwera* (*Saints*) *bahikye okutaga kwaintu hali Isitwe Rubanga.* Karubanga (1949), pp. 38–9.

[15] Most are ostensibly peasant cultivators, like almost all Nyoro. But a few, who have made a reputation as mediumistic diviners, travel widely in Bunyoro and beyond as 'professionals', making, it is said, considerable incomes.

[16] Details of the initiation rites are given in Beattie (1957A). Though the stress on secrecy is no doubt traditional, it may well have received greater emphasis and wider application during the past half century or so, since cult participation has come to be a punishable offence.

[17] Cf. Nadel (1946), p. 35; for Nuba mediums also ' a forced falsetto ' is often the accepted spirit voice.

[18] This is also reported from elsewhere in Africa. Cf. Nadel (1946), p. 36: ' without doubt, shamanism is on the increase.'

[19] Nyoro have some grounds for their belief that their population is declining; at least such evidence as exists suggests that, unlike that of many neighbouring peoples, it is certainly not increasing. In 1902 Sir Harry Johnston estimated the population of Bunyoro at 110,000, and in the 1948 census the total African population of the district was estimated as 108,380. Both of these figures are estimates, but even allowing for a wide margin of error they do not suggest an expanding population. I have frequently been told that Europeans are anxious for the Nyoro, whom they regard as a decadent and useless people, to die out so that they may take over their land. Absurd though such statements may appear to us and to educated Nyoro, they seem much less so to uneducated peasants, with no first-hand acquaintance with white people.

[20] Cf., for example, Kluckhohn and Leighton (1946), pp. 175–6.

[21] There is a brief account of it in Beattie (1960), pp. 75–7.

[22] In 1955 the costs of initiation into the cult of some of the better-known spirits were said to be as follows:

Rubanga:	600 shillings plus 2 goats and 2 fowls
Rutale:	550 shillings
Mugasa:	450 shillings
Kyomya:	400 shillings
Kidandi:	390 shillings
Kupumpuli:	385 shillings
Kyozange:	400 shillings
Kagoro:	250 shillings

[23] Questions of which I have record relate to domestic relations (' my husband hates me, I do not know why '), suspected theft of lost articles, and various other misfortunes, as well as, explicitly or implicitly, to sorcery.

[24] Cf. on this point Nadel (1946), p. 32), writing about the Nuba of the Southern Sudan: ' Through the spirit-inspired innovations the group is constantly adjusting and enriching its supernatural mastery over the universe.'

[25] It has been brilliantly expounded by Michel Leiris (1958) in his account of the spirit cult among the Ethiopians of Gondar.

APPENDIX I

Songs of Particular Cwezi *mbandwa*

WAMARA

senda amahe ndi Wamara
buigunda njojo enyona,
bigere bisaga omumuhanda.

drive away the armies, I am Wamara
the terrible elephant, the destroyer
whose feet are larger than the path.

KYOMYA

Natunda Kabwagu ehe eee
Natunda n'ekisura ehe eee nunu
Natunda, ehe, eee, nunu
Natunda mwiru wange, eee.

Kabwagu is selling, ehe, eee
He is selling salt,[1] ehe, eee, nunu,
He is selling, ehe, eee, nunu,
My man is selling, eee.

[1] *ekisura* is salt from the salt lake at Katwe, in Toro district.

NDAHURA

Ndahura kya Rubimba nyowe
Omwana atali mutwe
Azaire omwana
Atali mutwe Ndahura kya Rubimba

I am Ndahura (the child of) the Potter[1]
The child without a head.
She has given birth to a child,
A child without a head, Ndahura of the Potter

MUGASA

Narambura enyanja Katerega
Obwolibona akasaka katahire
Otalimukya omurro okakacumika
Obwolirora akajoka nyabutaito
Otalimukya omwigo okakatera
Buli aliba ali nuwe omwana omuterega

Katerega is surveying the lake
If you see a small bush don't burn it.
Do not make fire and burn it.
If you see a tiny snake,
Don't raise a stick and beat it,
It will be a beautiful child.

NYABUZANA

Irima lya hara twara karamu kalire,
Irima lya hara litwaire omuramu atalire,
Jagajagira tugende.

The far away field takes the sibling-in-law
who has eaten,
The far away field has taken the sibling-in-law
who has not eaten,
Waddle along and let us go.

Omwa okali bugonoka olиromberayo
Aha tindiromberayo.

At Okali Bugonoka's[2] place there you will be poor.
Aha, I shall not be poor there.

(this song is sung by Nyabuzana, and when it is finished those present shout 'well done, adyeri' (*webale adyeri*), to which Nyabuzana replies through the medium 'Please, I have done well, my people' (*kululu kululu kululu nkozile waisye*).

RUKOHE and KIGARA

Galikunyuka muleke kulira
Galikunyuka we muleke kulira

(the horns) will clash together (in the fight), leave off crying;
they will clash together, you, leave off crying.

[1] The Cwezi Ndahura is said to have been brought up by a potter who rescued him from the river, where he had been thrown by his grandfather (cf. Fisher, 1911, pp. 86–7).

[2] Bugonoka has reference to death and the world of ghosts.

KAHUKA[1]

Kahuka ka muzinga
Kahuka ka muzinga ogenda noyenda,
Nohinduka,
Kahuka ka muzinga.

Kahuka of the hive,
Kahuka of the hive, you are happy as you go;
You are changing,
Kahuka of the hive.

KAIKARA

Gira gira ngende nyamatimbo,
gira gira ngende,
gira gira ngende nyamatimbo, bakuru tibansanga;
Kaikara adyeri nyamatimbo,
gira, gira, ngende.

Get on (and do it) get on, that I may go, Nyamatimbo,
Get on, get on, and let me go.
Get on, get on, and let me go, Nyamatimbo, that the old people may not find me here;
Kaikara adyeri Nyamatimbo, get on, that I may go.

(*Nyamatimbo* is the pupa of a butterfly, and the point of the song seems to be to speed up the possession.)

(Unidentified female *mbandwa*.)

Narra abwoli[2] *nyabweza ngambo,*
kacumu ka abwoli kali omubahesi,
kaigo ka abwoli kali omubabaizi,
ngambira abwoli ekyabaro akuterire,
Narra Ngango narra abwoli.

Abwoli, who beautifies speech, is weeping,
Abwoli's little spear is at the blacksmith's,
Abwoli's little stick is at the carpenter's,
Tell me, Abwoli, why has your husband beaten you?
Ngango is weeping, Abwoli is weeping.

APPENDIX II

Mbandwa Spirit Vocabulary

Verbs (stems only; the infinitive prefix *oku-* is omitted)

English	*Lunyoro*	*Rubandwa*	*Notes on Rubandwa words*
bear, give birth	zara	tendegula	
beat	tera	sambula	
cook	cumba	bulunga	
cultivate, dig	lima	huguza	
curse	kyena	janjula	
die	fa	gonoka	
drink	nywa	mirankura	
eat	lya	kindama	
full, be	iguta	sengera	
give	ha	azika	
go	genda	senga, kulukumba	

[1] Kahuka also means 'small insect'. [2] *Abwoli* is one of the *mpako* names.

English	*Lunyoro*	*Rubandwa*	*Notes on Rubandwa words*
hurt, be	rumwa	muziguzi	
ill, be	rwara	tonobora	
laugh	seka	menya	
lie down	byama	jumala	
raise up	imukya	tegama	
sing	zina	imbiliza	*imba* means 'sing' in other Bantu languages—e.g. Swahili, Kisukuma.
swear	rahira	busobwawe	
take	twara	sohora	
visit	bunga	hegeya	
walk	rubata	numbira, zenga	
wash (hands)	naba	zibura	
weep	cura	bologa	*bologa* in Kisukuma means 'to wail loudly'.
Substantives (initial vowels are omitted)			
bag	nsaho	nkoloba	
bananas	bitoke	maunga, bihunga, bidasi	
barkcloth	rubugo	rutiba	
basket	kiibo	kitandiko	
bead	nkwanzi	byagali	
beans	bihimba	bidangwa	
beer	mwenge	mutumairaro	Lunyoro *tuma*, *semd*, and *iraro*, madness
belly	nda	ntundu	
blessing	mugisa	mbalaka	
bowl (wooden)	rucuba	rukonambaizi	
bride	mugole	musahazi	
child	mwana	mwerere	
cobra	ncwera	bikyabira	
coffee	mwani	kaitamukago	Lunyoro *ita*, kill, and *mukago*, blood pact[1]
compound (courtyard)	zigati	muganda	
cow	nte	mpangi	
cow-pea	nkole	nzongera	
ears	matu	mahuliko	
European	Mzungu	Mutukuramatama	Lunyoro *tukura*, red, *matama*, cheeks
eyes	maiso	masonko, masoko	
father	so	sozara	Lunyoro for 'father-in-law'
fowl	nkoko	ntoratozi	Also in Sukuma Cwezi vocabulary
frog	kikere	masarule	
ghost	mazimu	munigi	

[1] A coffee berry is used in the ceremony of making a blood pact.

English	*Lunyoro*	*Rubandwa*	*Notes on Rubandwa words*
girl	muisiki	mutekwa	
goat	mbuzi	nyameme	
hand	ngaro	byangali	
head	mutwe	ruhanga	
hoe	nfuka	kyeramugongo	
house	nju	ntindi, ntiti	Also in Sukuma Cwezi vocabulary
hunger	njara	muziguzi, gukungonora	
husband	iba	masanzire	
kite (bird)	mpungu	malere	
knife	muhyo	mahirima	
legs	maguru	manenge, ebilenge	
lion	ntale	mbatagaze	
man	musaija	muturumi	
manioc	muhogo	nywagi	
meat	nyama	nkatu	
milk	mata	masereke	
millet	buro	bujuju, buzuzu	
mother	nyina	nyinazara	Lunyoro for ' mother-in-law '
mushroom (small white variety)	butuzi	bwatansi	
neck	bikya	bisahuzi	
path	muhanda	luhulo	
people	bantu	batenkuru, bamukaka	
pot	kinaga	kimuga	
rain	njura	ntonya	Lunyoro *tonya*, drip (as rain
relish	mukubi	munani	
rock	ibale	ihinja	
salt	munyu	musenyi	Lunyoro for ' sand '
sesame	macande	masenkere, eninu	
sibling (of opposite sex)	munyanya	karamuzi	
spear	icumu	isongora	Lunyoro *songora*, cut to a point, sharpen.
stick	mwigo	mukoni	Lunyoro *rukoni*, pipe-stem euphorbia
sun	izoba	munyali	
sweet potato	ebitakuli	byatansi	
teeth	maino	meramaino	
termite	nswa	buningiro	
water	maizi	matunga	
wind	muyaga	muunga	
woman	mukazi	matunkwa	
Greeting			
Have you slept well?	oraireota?	okotomaireho?	

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THE POVERTY DATUM LINE IN CENTRAL AFRICA

Editorial Introduction

THE publication of Dr. D. G. Bettison's 'The Poverty Datum Line in Central Africa' (*Human Problems in British Central Africa*, Rhodes-Livingstone Journal No. 27) provoked a 'Note on the Poverty Datum Line' by Mrs. B. Thomson and Mr. G. Kay (Nutritionist and Human Geographer, respectively, to the Health and Nutrition Scheme, Fort Rosebery). Both the Thomson-Kay criticisms and Bettison's rejoinder are presented in this Journal.

Basically, the Poverty Datum Line concept aims to objectify the

Weekly P.D.L. Diets per Man/Week in ounces

Item	*Salisbury, 1945 Batson**	*Salisbury, 1957 Bettison†*	*Lusaka, 1957 Bettison†*	*Fort Rosebery, 1960 Thomson-Kay‡*
Meat	60	56	24·5	4
Dry Fish	—	—	12·3	5
Milk Fresh	1 pint	1 pint	—	—
,, Condensed	7 oz.	—	—	—
Eggs	1 egg	1 egg	—	—
Maize flour	16	128	73·5	112
Bread (stale)	112	—	—	—
Potatoes	80	40	—	20 (sweet)
Rice	8	8	—	—
Cassava	—	—	24·5 (fresh)	56 (flour)
Groundnuts	—	4	24·5	8
Beans	8	8	12·3	32
Oils/Fats	7	8	12·3	—
Veg./Fruit	64	72·5	61·2	24
Sugar	16	24	28	—
Syrup	4	—	—	—
Condiments	6*d.*	14*d.*	14*d.*	1½*d.*

* Batson, E., 1945. *The Poverty Datum Line in Salisbury*, School of Social Science, University of Cape Town.

† Bettison, D. G., 1960. 'The Poverty Datum Line in Central Africa', *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, No. 27, M.U.P.

‡ Thomson, B., and Kay, G., 1961. 'A Note on the Poverty Datum Line' (published hereunder).

assessment of poverty: that is, it represents a definition of a man's barest minimum requirements in order to maintain health and decency at the lowest possible cost. But while there is more or less agreement on the *categories* of needs which go to make up a P.D.L.—food, clothing, cleansing materials, light and fuel, transport,

housing, and taxes — the *details* under each head are less easily agreed to. With regard to food, for example (which comprises about two-thirds of the P.D.L. cost, and which is the main area of disagreement between Bettison and Thomson-Kay), there is considerable difference of opinion between both nutritionists and sociologists as to what constitutes a man's minimum requirements. Even where similar nutritional standards are accepted, there may be disagreement in their translation into actual foodstuffs and their cost. This is clear from the table above, in which four diets for Africans in Central Africa are compared.

It is clear, then, that any P.D.L. schedule must be regarded with some circumspection. Not only is the very definition of the concept open to diverse interpretation (e.g. ' barest minimum ', ' decency '), but the author of a P.D.L. must also make certain, in a sense, arbitrary decisions: how far should a P.D.L. be racially determined in a multiracial society; to what extent should existing food and eating habits be taken into consideration; to what extent do differences in climate, individual occupation and activity, etc. affect the P.D.L. requirements; what are a man's minimum clothing needs (in terms of both quantity and quality); and so on.

There is thus no *one* P.D.L. based on objectively determined and generally agreed minima. Each P.D.L. calculation is based on its author's interpretation of the concept as well as his own considerations as to what constitutes minimum needs in each category. Any P.D.L. must therefore be evaluated in terms of its author's statement of his methods and criteria.

A NOTE ON THE POVERTY DATUM LINE IN NORTHERN RHODESIA

By B. Thomson and G. Kay

Dr. D. G. Bettison's work (1959 and 1960) on the Poverty Datum Line (P.D.L.) has aroused much interest in Central Africa but unfortunately it has been misinterpreted by many of those who have had occasion only to consult the results of his calculations and have not studied his work in detail. A note on the concept and on Bettison's use of it may help to elucidate some of the misconceptions which at present surround both.

The purpose of the P.D.L., according to Professor E. Batson (1945), is ' stating the barest minimum upon which subsistence and health can theoretically be achieved '. He points out that it is not a ' human standard ' and it does not allow a penny for ' comforts or luxuries of any kind '. In adopting this principle and calculating the expenditure necessary to maintain each household at a ' standard of consumption commensurate with human needs at a minimum level of health and decency ' Bettison claims to use orthodox P.D.L. measures which ' proceed from the assumption that it is possible

to ascertain the *lowest possible cost of supplying the elementary fundamental necessities of life in a given society*' (Bettison, 1960 : our italics). However his paper, 'The Poverty Datum Line in Central Africa', makes it abundantly clear that many arbitrary decisions and personal opinions enter into his calculations. We consider that to be of the greatest practical value P.D.L. calculations must be purely objective and must adhere strictly to the principles stated above. Thus we find some of the allowances made by Bettison, particularly those for food which constitute some 65 per cent of the total, to be inconsistent with the concept of the P.D.L.

In Table 1 the nutrients available in Bettison's P.D.L. diet are compared with recommended minimum requirements for an adult male weighing 65 kg. and undertaking normal activity in the tropics. The nutritional content of the *Fort Rosebery P.D.L. Diet*, an objectively determined, minimum-cost diet suitable for an adult male as specified above, is also shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

THE NUTRIENTS AVAILABLE PER MAN PER DAY IN THE BETTISON AND THE FORT ROSEBERY P.D.L. DIETS COMPARED WITH THE STANDARD REQUIREMENTS

	Standard Requirements	*Bettison Content*	*P.D.L. Diet percentage of Stand.*	*Fort Rosebery Content*	*P.D.L. Diet percentage of Stand.*
Calories* . . .	3040·0	3263·0	107	3044·0	100
Protein (gm.)†					
Total . . .	32·5‡	103·3	318	74·0	228
From animal sources . .		36·9	113	10·6	33
Calcium (mg.) . .	700·0	1341·0	192	840·0	120
Iron (mg.) . . .	9·0	27·2	302	47·3	523
Vitamin A (I.U.) .	4000·0	7587·0	189	8668·0	216
Aneurin (mg.) . .	1·0	1·9	190	2·4	240
Riboflavin (mg.) .	1·6	1·25	78	1·39	87
Nicotinic acid (mg.)	15·0	28·9	193	20·8	137
Ascorbic Acid (mg.)	40·0	222·0	554	85·0	212

* Calculated from 'Calorie Requirements' F.A.O. (1957).

† Calculated from recommendations made at a Conference on 'Human Protein Requirements and their Fulfilment in Practice' (1955).

All the other Requirements are from *S.A. Medical Journal*, 4th February 1956.

‡ Protein requirements are expressed in terms of milk protein. When the protein in the diet is derived from a mixture of animal and vegetable foods a larger quantity is required to give the correct mixture of amino-acids.

Both diets are nutritionally adequate in all items except riboflavin, which is unduly low in Bettison's diet. However, there are very considerable differences in their animal protein content.

Human protein requirements are still undergoing much research and no fixed conclusions have been reached. In 1955 a conference on human protein requirements was sponsored jointly by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization and the Josiah Macy, Jr., Foundation. One of the general conclusions which emerged was ' that the allowances recommended by previous committees and based mainly on intakes in Western countries are at all ages too high, and to reduce them is not only realistic but scientifically sound '. With regard to this conclusion the Conference recommended that ' taking the evidence as a whole, an intake of 0·5 gm. per kg. (of body weight, per day) should be enough for an adult, provided that the protein is of good quality '. In practice it is the amino-acid balance of the protein content that determines the adequacy of the diet and a suitable balance can be obtained from a mixture of animal protein with the cheaper vegetable proteins, thus reducing the cost of the diet. In Bettison's allowance some 30 per cent of the total expenditure on food is on fish and meat. This is considered to be unwarranted in calculating the P.D.L.

The composition of the diet suggested by Bettison raises more serious criticism because it bears little relationship to the normal eating habits of Africans living at or near P.D.L. standards, and, indeed, it would be unacceptable to most Africans. We cannot agree with Dr. Bettison that ' there is little point in labouring these objections ' for they fundamentally affect the value of the whole P.D.L. calculations.

The African's diet may be divided into four groups of foodstuffs. The two most important form the traditional meal of *bwali* and *munani* which is the basis of the diet. *Bwali* is a very stiff porridge made from flour and water. In urban areas maize flour is the normal staple, *munani* is a stew or ' relish ' dish made from meat, fish, pulses, leaves, mushrooms, caterpillars or any other food suitable for a thick stew or sauce. Tomatoes and onions, together with condiments and seasonings, are popular additions to this dish. Generally only two such main meals are eaten per day, but they are supplemented by ' snacks ' and the traditional components of these constitute the third group of foodstuffs. The more important items, which are usually roasted or boiled, are green maize, pumpkins, sweet potatoes and cassava roots, together with fruits when available. The fourth group is of ' luxury goods ' though salt, an essential, is included for convenience. These foodstuffs are mostly of European origin and the most commonly purchased are cooking oils, and fats, bread, sugar, tea and milk but others include rice, jam, biscuits, and a variety of tinned foods.

Quantitative dietary studies in Lusaka, the Luapula Province and Fort Rosebery show that an adult will eat 8–9 oz. of flour per meal in the form of *bwali*. Average weights for relish foods per meal are 4 oz. of fresh meat or 1 oz. dried fish (3 or 4 oz. cooked

weight), or 3–4 oz. of leaves or 3–4 oz. of pulses. Bettison's diet allows flour for only 9 *bwali* meals per week but sufficient relish for 6 meat stews and 12 dried fish stews in addition to numerous pulse and vegetable dishes. Lack of flour for *bwali* is the most frequent reason encountered in field work for failure to eat, and the excess of relish provided by Bettison could not be used because of this reason.

In Table 2 the Bettison and the Fort Rosebery P.D.L. diets are compared with the actual food consumption of four wage groups in Fort Rosebery (B. Thomson, 1960) and of two groups of households in Lusaka (B. Thomson, 1954). We do not propose to discuss each item individually but merely to comment on the major discrepancies between the Bettison diet and the observed diets. As already indicated above the unbalanced composition of the main meals provided by the former is the most obvious of these. In the analysis of actual food consumption the relish dish varies from 26·8 per cent to 30·7 per cent of the whole meal. In Bettison's diet the relish forms 60 per cent of the total, an undesirable and unpalatable proportion, whilst he allows approximately a half of the quantity of *bwali* that is customarily eaten even by those in the lower income groups. The proportion of all basic foodstuffs (groups 1 to 3) consumed as snacks is rather less consistent and varies from 5·6 per cent to 12·5 per cent in the observed diets. Thus Bettison's figure of 16·5 per cent appears rather high, but this is a relatively minor point.

The group of luxury foods and its place in the P.D.L. requires rather more attention for it is in this field that opinions differ widely as to what is essential in a minimum-cost diet commensurate with health and decency and taking into account the customs of the given society. The traditional African diet does not contain these foodstuffs and even among the Tonga cash-crop farmers 'though most families make occasional small purchases of luxury goods such as sugar . . . only a few have come to consider such items as an essential part of their diet' (E. Colson, 1958). Thus the tastes for such foods appear to develop with urban experience and, most important, with the availability of a surplus of cash to purchase them. Mitchell (1954) commented on the growing taste of urban Africans for white bread, a tendency related to the notion that ' bread is a civilized food, the food of Europeans ' and therefore has an appeal not related to its nutritive value. Bread for breakfast and tea drinking become social attributes of those well established in urban customs and able to afford them.

In Lusaka ' it was clear that money was spent first on maize meal and meat, then on beans, leaves and groundnuts. Finally, if there was still money to spare sugar and tea were bought ' (B. Thomson, 1954). Of the total expenditure on foodstuffs by the 25 per cent sample of households in the Main Location only 11·5 per cent was spent on luxuries and the comparable figure in the Chilenge Township was 18·3 per cent. The relative figures for the few households

TABLE 2

THE COMPOSITION OF THE BETTISON AND FORT ROSEBERY P.D.L. DIETS AND OF THE ACTUAL DIETS OF FOUR WAGE GROUPS IN FORT ROSEBERY AND OF TWO GROUPS OF HOUSEHOLDS IN LUSAKA

Foodstuffs	*Bettison P.D.L. Diet (oz. per man per week)*	*Fort Rosebery** £1–£5	£5–10	£10–15	*Over* £15 (*oz. per head per week*)	*Lusaka†* *Main Location*	*Chilenge* (*lb. per household per month*)	*Fort Rosebery P.D.L. Diet (oz. per man per week)*
(1) *Bwali Foods*								
Maize flour	73·5	92·0	125·5	124·0	148·0	133·0	167·0	112·0
Cassava flour	—	36·0	16·0	11·0	5·9	—	—	56·0
Total	73·5	128·0	141·5	135·0	153·9	133·0	167·0	168·0
(2) *Relish Foods*								
Meat	24·5	9·5	12·6	20·5	22·4	34·0	46·0	4·0
Fresh fish	—	4·7	6·4	5·7	5·7	—	—	—
Dried fish	12·3	10·7	13·3	11·6	9·3	1·0	1·0	4·0
Beans	12·3	3·1	2·0	1·7	3·0	5·0	7·0	32·0
Groundnuts	24·5	3·0	1·5	1·5	1·6	2·0	1·0	8·0
Fresh green vegetables	12·3	12·2	9·9	10·6	9·4	} 17·0	} 16·0	16·0
Tomatoes	12·3	3·0	3·2	4·5	5·0			4·0
Onions	12·3	2·1	2·8	3·8	4·3			4·0
Total	110·5	48·3	51·7	59·9	60·7	59·0	71·0	73·0
(3) *Snack Foods*								
Green maize	—	3·7	0·3	6·3	0·5			—
Pumpkins	—	7·4	4·7	1·2	11·6			—
Sweet Potatoes	—	6·0	4·7	6·0	7·0	N.D.	N.D.	20·0
Cassava roots	24·5	5·1	1·1	0·7	1·5			—
Fruits	12·0	—	—	—	—			—

(4) Luxury Foods								
Cooking oils and fats	12·3	1·5	2·6	3·1	3·5	1 pt.	1 pt.	—
Bread	—	2·8	7·2	9·1	10·1	8·0	14·0	—
Sugar	28·0	1·9	4·4	5·7	7·4	2·0	12·0	—
Dried milk	—	—	0·3	0·7	1·0	—	1·0	—
Fresh milk	—	—	—	—	—	½ pt.	1½ pt.	—
Tea	(1/2*d.*)	—	0·1	0·1	0·2	N.D.	N.D.	—
Condiments		(1½*d.*)	(1½*d.*)	(1½*d.*)	(1½*d.*)	N.D.	N.D.	(1½*d.*)
Rice	—	—	—	—	—	—	4·0	—
Relish as percentage of main meals	60·0	27·4	26·8	30·6	28·2	30·7	29·8	30·2
Snacks as percentage of basic foods	16·5	12·5	5·6	7·3	9·6	N.D.	N.D.	8·3
Total expenditure on the diet	13*s.* 6½*d.*	6*s.* 10¾*d.*	8*s.* 2¼*d.*	9*s.* 4½*d.*	10*s.* 1¾*d.*	11*s.* 7*d.*‡	16*s.* 10*d.*‡	6*s.* 9*d.*
Percentage of the expenditure on:								
(1) Bwali foods	9·4	31·4	28·6	26·2	28·2	34·5	29·8	43·2
(2) Relish foods	55·8	53·7	54·9	53·7	47·5	54·0	51·9	53·1
(3) Snack foods	6·2	1·8	1·0	2·4	2·5	—	—	2·2
(4) Luxury foods	28·6	13·1	15·5	17·7	21·8	11·5	18·3	1·5

* In Fort Rosebery the total food consumption per household was measured. This amount has been divided by the household size to give consumption per head. The average size of family in the four wage groups in the above order is 4·5, 4·3, 4·83, and 4·92.

† Based on B. Thomson, 1954, Table XIII. The quantities of snack foods and of certain luxuries are not available.

‡ Based on B. Thomson, 1954, Table XIV. The figures are those obtained in the survey of 25 per cent of the households in the areas noted. The table gives expenditure on *Assorted Purchases* which consist largely of luxuries but also include small quantities of snack foods. No attempt has been made to divide this figure which is here given as *Luxury Foods*.

N.D. = No Details.

participating in the intensive study were 17·9 per cent and 29·4 per cent and these are representative of households with above average incomes. More recently in Fort Rosebery similar tendencies have been observed. In the lowest of the four income groups 13·1 per cent of the total expenditure on foodstuffs was devoted to luxury goods ; the comparable figures in the other three groups are 15·5, 17·7 and 21·8 per cent (Table 2). Budget studies conducted independently confirm this trend (Kay, 1960) :

Wage group	*Average wage*	*Percentage of expenditure on foodstuffs spent on luxuries*
£1 –£5	£3 9*s.* 8*d.*	7·0
£5 –£10	£8 3*s.* 10*d.*	11·5
£10–£15	£12 3*s.* 4*d.*	15·3
£15–£20	£16 17*s.* 3*d.*	20·5
Over £20	£26 4*s.* 8*d.*	24·2
Bettison P.D.L.		28·6

Thus whilst European type foods such as bread, tea, sugar and milk are becoming increasingly popular as customs change, money is spent on these items only if available after the essential purchases of staple flour and relish foods have been made. Therefore in order to conform strictly with the principle of the P.D.L. which ' does not allow a penny for luxuries or comforts of any kind ', and to be objective rather than subjective we would omit all luxuries from the P.D.L. diet. The Effective Minimum Level, discussed below, makes due allowance for the demands of custom in this direction.

We find Bettison's allowance of 3*s.* 10½*d.* per man per week for foods which can be classed as luxuries is unjustifiably high. It is considerably in excess, both relative to the total purchases of food and in absolute terms, of the expenditure by those households earning more than £15 per month. Furthermore his allocation of this sum is unrealistic both nutritionally and with regard to eating habits. 1*s.* 3½*d.* is spent per man per week on cooking fats, 1*s.* 5*d.* on sugar and 1*s.* 2*d.* on condiments and beverages, but neither bread nor milk are allowed.

We therefore consider Bettison's P.D.L. diet unsatisfactory and consequently his allowance for food as unacceptable. We suggest that the Fort Rosebery P.D.L. diet, which costs 6*s.* 9*d.* per man per week at the lowest prices available in Fort Rosebery (which do not differ substantially from those in other towns and are consistently slightly higher than those quoted by Bettison for Lusaka) conforms more closely to both the principle of the P.D.L. and the dietetic habits of the majority of urban Africans.

There are two other relatively minor criticisms of Bettison's P.D.L. calculations, both related to housing. Firstly, under the heading ' Fuel and Light ' 3*s.* 0½*d.* per household per month is allowed for depreciation on a stove. In our experience many Africans in towns cook quite adequately on improvised hearths

or on the stoves provided in most recent, official houses. Bettison (1959) notes that 65 per cent of those interviewed in Lusaka cooked only on open hearths. Depreciation of stoves should be given no more consideration than that of the more necessary cooking utensils and similar items. Secondly, under the heading ' Cleaning Materials ' $6\frac{1}{2}d.$ per head per month is allowed for the supply of 150 gallons of water. Usually water charges are included with rents and are paid by the employers; as rents are not considered it seems illogical to include water charges.

These three points effect a very considerable reduction of Bettison's P.D.L. in Lusaka and the differences are noted in Table 3. Thus Bettison's indication that 22 per cent of the single males, 65 per cent of the married childless couples and 80 per cent of all families with children in Lusaka have wage-incomes insufficient to keep them at a minimum level of health and decency is ill-founded. These figures indicate extremely widespread " poverty "; conditions which are not found in the urban areas of Northern Rhodesia.

TABLE 3

BETTISON'S P.D.L. AND THE ' REVISED P.D.L.' FIGURES FOR A SELECTION OF HOUSEHOLDS IN LUSAKA

Household size	*Bettison's P.D.L.*	*Revised P.D.L.*
	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*
Single adult male*	4 7 5	2 14 6
Married couple aged 16–64	7 13 $6\frac{1}{2}$	4 15 $2\frac{1}{2}$
Couple and 1 child aged 0–4	9 10 2	6 0 $11\frac{1}{2}$
Couple and 1 child aged 5–9	9 18 2	6 2 $2\frac{1}{2}$
Couple and 1 child aged 10–15	10 14 9	6 11 6
Couple and 2 children aged 0–4, 5–9	11 12 5	7 1 $9\frac{1}{2}$
Couple and 2 children aged 5–9, 10–15	12 16 $10\frac{1}{2}$	7 16 $0\frac{1}{2}$
Couple and 3 children, one in each group	14 11 0	8 15 $6\frac{1}{2}$
Aged couple	5 8 6	3 9 1

* Fort Rosebery calculations—£2 5*s.* 4*d.* (Kay, 1960).

By overstating the case of poverty Bettison has somewhat discredited the concept of the P.D.L. in the eyes of those who are aware of current conditions. Furthermore his work has fostered the false conclusion that the P.D.L. is an ideal standard to which minimum incomes should be related. Batson declares the P.D.L. to be a scientifically determined base level from which standards may be measured and that it should be ' explicitly distinguished from ideal standards of living '. He continues to show that it does not allow the purchase of the many things that are necessary in life if not essential to life and that ' a household whose Net Available Income is just equal to its P.D.L. will not usually spend the whole

of its Net Available Income on items allowed for in the P.D.L.'.

Whatever the income some proportion of it will be spent on 'comforts and luxuries'. No doubt the Fort Rosebery P.D.L. diet would be made more attractive by the purchase of a little more meat or fish, a little sugar or possibly bread, and few households would entirely forgo tobacco and beer. Furniture, crockery and cooking utensils are not generally considered dispensable, and education is eagerly sought by parents and children. Without such indulgences life would be virtually intolerable. However the P.D.L. specifically and deliberately omits all consideration of these non-essentials. 'It thus admirably fulfills its purpose of stating the barest minimum upon which subsistence and health can theoretically be achieved' (Batson) and it is able to maintain its objectivity.

It is therefore pertinent to enquire what income is necessary, in view of the prevalent expenditure patterns, to permit a household to live at P.D.L. standards. Batson defined this income level, 'at which the competition of other wants slackens sufficiently to permit the purchase of a budget equivalent to that allowed for in the P.D.L.', as the *Effective Minimum Level* (E.M.L.) and in his studies in Cape Town he found it to be about 150 per cent of the P.D.L. Budget studies in Fort Rosebery indicate it to be about 143 per cent of the P.D.L., a figure comparable to Batson's. Bettison neglected this most important corollary to the P.D.L. and did not calculate the E.M.L. for Lusaka. Accordingly he misused the P.D.L. in considering the ability to pay rent (1959) and subsequently similar errors have been made in other fields. If a household is to live at P.D.L. standards its income must attain that of the E.M.L. Therefore if minimum incomes are to be considered in relation to an expenditure level the latter should be used rather than the former.

Without the necessary data on wage-incomes and household size and composition we are unable to comment on the economic status of the population of Lusaka in relation to the above findings. However it might be useful to give a summary of the situation analysed in Fort Rosebery (Kay, 1960).[1] The P.D.L. and the E.M.L. (as 150 per cent of the P.D.L.) were calculated for 573 wage-earning households. 29 per cent of these have wage-incomes below their P.D.L. and thus cannot, without other sources of income, maintain a minimum standard of health and decency. A further 22·5 per cent have wage-incomes between their P.D.L. and their E.M.L. and unless they spend these incomes more judiciously than the average resident or have supplementary sources of income their consumption will fall below that of the P.D.L. 48·5 per cent

[1] These data are based on statistics collected during 1959. Since then there have been two notable wage increases for daily paid workers, and also increases for Civil Servants. For example, a daily-paid labourer employed by the Government in Fort Rosebery in 1959 received 2*s*. 2*d*. per day; this was increased to 2*s*. 7*d*. on the 1st January 1960, and to 3*s*. 3*d*. on the 1st January 1961. The relative figures in Lusaka for 1960 and 1961 are 3*s*. 10*d* and 5*s*. 11*d*. Thus the situations described have already changed considerably.

have wage-incomes above their E.M.L. and it is likely that their standard of living is somewhat above that of the P.D.L. These figures indicate very different circumstances from those presented by Bettison and we suggest that they are probably nearer the truth.

In conclusion we must record that this note is not an attempt to make light of the problems of the present wage-structure, much less to minimize the needs of the Africans in the towns. It is intended to correct a misinterpretation, as we see it, of the concept of the Poverty Datum Line and to help towards a true understanding of the problems of Northern Rhodesia.[1]

[1] We regret that because our experience is confined to Northern Rhodesia we are unable to comment fully on the comparable work by Dr. Bettison in Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia. However, we tentatively suggest that our major criticisms are probably valid in relation to his P.D.L. calculations in those countries.

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A REPLY TO THE NOTE OF B. THOMSON AND G. KAY

Some of the criticism made by B. Thomson and G. Kay of my Poverty Datum Line study deserves comment. A few general remarks must be made on the methodology of P.D.L. calculation and, unfortunately, what appears to be the motive for their note.

An attempt to draw a line in monetary terms between ' poverty '

on one side and ' affluence ' on the other must involve ' arbitrary decisions and personal opinions ' in the items to be included as minimally necessary for health and decency. There is a variety of commodities available to a given public which in urban areas is considerable ; the prices of these commodities vary in short- and long-term contexts ; the distribution of frequencies in which each is purchased varies in accord with a variety of circumstances, and many other variables, are such as to force a P.D.L. calculator into an admittedly unhappy process of choice.

There is, undeniably, theoretical substance in Thomson and Kay's argument that at any given time a biologically minimum but adequate diet can be calculated from the various prices currently ruling and its cost ascertained. But such an exercise is far removed from the level at which decisions are made from day to day by an ordinary person whose knowledge of the market is considerably more restricted. To give a P.D.L. some practical significance the latter state of affairs cannot be ignored in determining what would be a minimum for health and decency over a more lengthy period. Methodologically considered there are clearly difficulties in holding to a minimum biological standard and at the same time admitting ' ways of life ' of a people. These ways are also subject to rapid change in urban African conditions.

One redress this situation offers is to state overtly and in detail what items one has included, to what extent and at what price. Readers may thereupon form their own judgement as to the appropriateness of the enumeration and its consequent monetary value. Persons differing in their belief as to where the line should be drawn may make their own calculations on their own standards by simple addition or subtraction.

That Thomson and Kay should differ from me in what standard to view as appropriate is not surprising. I have no doubt that many urban Africans would express the view that even my standard was considerably too low as a practical proposition for living. Their claim may be justified for a particular set of circumstances they may be experiencing.

It follows from the very nature of the exercise that a P.D.L. cannot be ' misinterpreted ' in terms of its own premises. It can only be read, I hold, in terms of what the calculator explicitly shows he has done. In my paper I not only state what entered into the calculation, but proceed to show by analysis of budgetary studies in Salisbury and Blantyre at least where the major differences between the actual situation and the standard to which I have worked occur. The differences have been made explicit. Any ' misinterpretation ' Thomson and Kay think my study may have led to must be in terms of a context outside of the process of enumeration and calculation. It is no error of mine if many readers ' have had occasion only to consult the results of his (my) calculation '; nor do I find myself fairly charged with having ' fostered the false conclusion that the

P.D.L. is an ideal standard to which minimum incomes should be related '.

For these and other reasons I find many of Thomson and Kay's remarks not only a trifle unfair but most interesting. If the P.D.L. has been used for other purposes than that for which I calculated it, the fact of its use may have a direct bearing on the overall purpose of my study—which appears in numbers 27 and 28 of this Journal—to examine the basis on which wage rates are fixed.

The most serious criticism to be answered is, I believe, that the standard I used is not the ' minimum ' that would sustain health and decency, but is seriously in excess of it in respect of food at least. If it is not the minimum, as Thomson and Kay argue, then the Line I have drawn is misleading and what they term the ' orthodox ' use of the technique has been exceeded. The question of what might rightly be viewed as the ' minimum ' is the subject to be answered from an academic point of view. It is taken up in some detail below. But to my knowledge the question of an ' orthodox ' method of assessing the standard to be used has never been settled in a society comprised of multiracial groups related to one another in highly differentiated ways from almost every angle of approach. Certainly Professor Batson has struggled persistently to settle the problem of customary habits of different ethnic groups in relation to the establishment of a minimum standard applicable to all. His Salisbury study in 1944 attempted one dietary scale for all racial groups. Earlier workers in England were not confronted with the problem to the same degree. In the light of this I find little substance in Thomson and Kay's remarks concerning the orthodoxy of my use of the technique.

Thomson and Kay's allocation for food is 6*s.* 9*d.* per man per week as against mine in Lusaka of 13*s.* 6½*d.* This is a reduction slightly in excess of 50 per cent. It is achieved by an increase over my allocation in the quantity of maize meal and a reduction in the relish content—especially proteins. It also involves the removal from my allocation of any form of condiment or ' luxury ' food. If this is the standard they prefer to adopt they are quite at liberty to do so. However, they are expecting a working man in Lusaka adequately to feed himself persistently from day to day on less than 1*s.* a day. Using my method of apportioning the needs of children—which itself is open to criticism on many counts I admit—a child under 10 years of age would be allocated 6*d.* to 7*d.* per day. These sums might be theoretically feasible from a purely dietetic point of view but I doubt their suitability to provide an adequate minimum in an on-going real life situation. The difficulty appears to arise from an emphasis on dietetics rather than accepting the fact that a P.D.L. is a numerical and monetary statement.

Some doubt is also thrown on the validity of an allocation of 6*s.* 9*d.* per week in 1958 when, for prices ruling between 1947 and 1950, Thomson reservedly considered ' 5*s.* per man-value is the

minimum amount which must be spent each week to give a reasonably adequate diet'.[1] It may be noted that the price of maize meal at that time is given by Thomson (p. 18) as 9·3 oz. per 1*d.* (1 lb. 12 oz. for threepence) from the market vendors, as against 4·8 oz. per 1*d.* (73·5 oz. for 15·3 pence in Table 2 of my P.D.L. Paper) when my study was made in 1958.

Thomson and Kay's method of arriving at the 'minimum' is through a purely dietetic or biological approach to man's food requirements. It is qualified only by the need to make it conform closely to the diet habits of the people concerned. Such an approach is persistently in danger of ignoring the fact that men live in a social system. For P.D.L. purposes it seems incongruous to stick to a biological standard for food when it is realised that all the other components of the P.D.L.—clothing, fuel and light, etc.—are in fact reflections of *social* pressures of one kind or another when the climate of Central Africa is considered.

Their method may be an improvement on the standard I used, and if so, I welcome it wholeheartedly. My misgivings concerning it have to do with the fact that measures of these diet habits are themselves a reflection of the size of income received by the people concerned. The evidence is fairly adequate that urban Africans in Central Africa change their diet habits with changes in size of income. Should then the standard for calculating a P.D.L. for urban Africans be established in terms of 'traditional' African habits? Should even the Plateau Tonga cash-crop farmers' standard be admitted as evidence for an urban situation? Thomson and Kay find it incongruous that I have included cooking fat, sugar and condiments in my standard but have ignored bread and milk. My attempt is aimed at acknowledging the changes the people are undergoing and meeting them half way.

The incongruity of the biological approach is seen if a P.D.L. was to be calculated for the European community of Lusaka. The customary diet habits would include bread and meat rather than maize meal and dried fish. But this would be considerably more expensive even if the biologically adequate criterion was applied. In a situation where two ethnic groups reside in one urban area and the commodities of one are available to the other but at a price marginal to what the latter can afford, it appears a little incongruous to apply one standard to white and another to black and justify them on grounds of both being biologically adequate using respective diet habits. I admit my own standard of diet was not a universal one, but at least it attempted to acknowledge the existence of urban social factors in the Africans' way of life. In short, it was what I considered to be a minimum social standard though its nutritive value was—and the fact is explicitly stated at the top of page 11—slightly generous according to the dietetic standard quoted also in

[1] Thomson, B. 'Two Studies in African Nutrition', R.L. Journal No. 24 1954, pp. 17–18.

the text. Methodologically, my method of assessment is not tied to any theoretical or unavoidable minimum—such as a dietetic minimum—and as such is more free to vary according to choice. This in itself may, of course, be advantageous particularly as the P.D.L. is a rather clumsy instrument intrinsically.

In passing it may be noted that the tabulation showing the percentage of expenditure on foodstuffs spent on luxuries (p. 46) is ambiguous. The 28·6 per cent placed against my P.D.L. presumably refers to the proportion 3*s.* 10½*d.* is of 13*s.* 6½*d.*, i.e. certain 'luxury' items against the weekly cost of food per man. To compare this percentage with those in the tabulation where average wages rise to £26 4*s.* 8*d.* per month without reference to any wage to which the 3*s.* 10½*d.* refers is a rather unusual statistical device. I also find it difficult to appreciate the relationship between the Effective Minimum Level and the ability to pay rent—especially when failure in the latter usually involves eviction while expenditure on most other components even in a P.D.L. calculation can be reduced without such serious consequences in an urban context.

In conclusion, I must point out that throughout these studies the term 'poverty' was used in its defined and comparative sense, i.e. an adverse difference between costs at a defined minimum standard and income from wages. The P.D.L. was calculated to serve as an instrument to give precision to this adverse difference. On occasions I have chosen words which underline certain circumstances which appeared to be affecting certain categories of people studied in order to emphasise that these circumstances appeared to be reaching an extreme degree of poverty. My general treatment has always been to acknowledge the fact that the standard I set in drawing the P.D. Line does allow a margin for fair living for those with incomes marginal to it. The language used has, I hope, always reflected this.

D. G. Bettison
23*rd January* 1960

The School of Pacific Studies,
The Australian National University,
Canberra.

INSTITUTE NOTES

Incorporation into the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland

In October 1960 the Trustees of the Institute agreed to its incorporation into the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. This decision was ratified by the Northern Rhodesia Legislative Council early this year and arrangements to complete the take-over by the end of 1961 are being finalized. The Institute will remain in Lusaka and its present structure will be largely maintained.

Staff Changes

Up to the time of going to press (July 1961), there have been the following changes in Institute staff:

Mr. H. A. Fosbrooke, after serving as Director for five years, retired from his post at the end of 1960 and is now in Government service in Tanganyika.

Mr. P. J. McEwan completed field-work in his investigation of immigrant European communities in Southern Rhodesia and is now writing up his conclusions in the United Kingdom.

Miss Ann Tweedie completed field-work on Bemba economics and has been writing up at Cambridge. She intends to resume work among the Bemba during 1961, having received a grant from the Colonial Social Science Research Council.

Mr. George Kay completed his study of Fort Rosebery at the end of 1960, publishing his findings in an Institute Communication (No. 21). He has also completed the plotting of settlement patterns in the Luapula Province and will return to the United Kingdom in August.

Dr. Raymond Apthorpe is completing his study of the Nsenga as well as of indigenous political systems, while the writing-up of his findings is well advanced. He leaves the Institute in August to take up a lecturing post at Ibadan.

Drs. Floyd and Lilian Dotson, affiliates from the United States, leave Northern Rhodesia in August, having completed their study of the Asian community.

In May the Institute welcomed Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Jones. Mr. Jones had completed a course of study at the London School of Economics under Dr. H. Himmelweit, and has begun his investigation of the effects of mass media of communication.

Publications

In the last Journal it was announced that the Institute would publish as a Paper four of Dr. Elizabeth Colson's Plateau Tonga articles which have appeared in various publications. It has since

been decided to include three further papers and to publish the collection as a book.

The Proceedings of the Fifteenth Institute Conference were published in June under the title 'Social Research and Community Development'. Edited by Dr. R. J. Apthorpe, the Proceedings include papers by members of staff and affiliates, local government officials, and authorities from other territories. Discussions on papers and the general conclusions of the conference have been summarized.

The first of a new series of Communications, entitled 'Central Bantu Historical Texts', appeared in July dealing with the Lala and Kaonde. The second in the series, on the Lunda of Kazembe, is scheduled for October. It is hoped that further texts will be submitted by students who have worked in Central Africa.

The Institute also plans to publish during 1961 a Communication on distribution patterns of the African population of Northern Rhodesia. Three lithographed maps will be produced together with a brief explanatory text.

In response to requests from interested bodies and persons, the Institute has agreed to publish a limited edition of Dr. Barry N. Floyd's dissertation *Changing Patterns of African Land Use in Southern Rhodesia* (pp. xiv, 410, 77-plate Atlas). These should be available by the end of the year at 40*s*. per copy (plus 1*s*. 6*d*. postage), and may be ordered direct from the Institute.

RACE RELATIONS IN RHODESIA AND NYASALAND

A Review Article

by

R. ROBINSON

The Two Nations: Aspects of Race Relations in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland. By RICHARD GRAY. Oxford, 1960. Pp. 355. 42*s.*

Year of Decision: Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 1960. By PHILIP MASON. Oxford, 1960. Pp. 254. 21*s.*

Race and Politics: Partnership in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. By EDWARD CLEGG. Oxford, 1960. Pp. 260. 30*s.*

WHEN it comes to writing contemporary history there are lions waiting in the squares enough to frighten most of us. Archives are closed and without them the historian finds it hard not to trim the past to his convictions about the present. But happily, in their history of race relations in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland from 1923 to 1960, Philip Mason and Richard Gray preserve their judgement and perspective. Both are clearly on the side of the angels. One of them, though in haste, goes on writing like one; and as the angelic role presumably is for inspired exposition rather than invention, too many fresh conceptions and original researches are hardly to be expected from what is first and foremost a labour of synthesis.

The Two Nations, and Edward Clegg's *Race and Politics*—the two agree so well that there is little to chosse between them—leave an impression that we have read something like this before. So far as the frame of the argument is concerned indeed we have; for the authors have applied to the Rhodesias the liberal social analysis authorized by De Kiewiet and Hancock for all Southern Africa more than twenty years ago. The merit lies in bringing it up to date.

In the revised as in the original version, the development of the Rhodesian communities is conceived as tragedy. 'Everyone's destiny is known.' All the victims are innocent; and Nemesis takes the form of a swiftly-extending identification of race with class until the passionate conflict of colour and the class struggle detonate each other in inevitable cataclysm.

Between the World Wars, white Rhodesians set up colour bars and territorial segregation to preserve their civilization; and since the African, except for short service as a migrant labourer was expected to remain a tribesman and a peasant on his allotted lands, separation from the Bantu peoples seemed perfectly feasible. By

1950 however industrialization in Southern Rhodesia and the Copperbelt had made nonsense of these assumptions. Large numbers of Africans has also become town-dwellers, organized in trade unions and congresses with all the aspirations of a modern proletariat. No longer a territorial boundary, the frontier between white and black as Dr. Gray puts it, has become a level of poverty demarcated by race. Colour-consciousness all the more potent because colour seemed the one obstacle to freedom and prosperity, was turning tribesmen into a nation. But the tragedy was this. When the Bantu asked to share of the white man's world, the Europeans with noble exceptions offered them too little and too late. They took refuge in Federation without giving enough partnership to persuade Africans that it was good for them, and without the generous concessions which might have saved men of good will on both sides from annihilation in the racial politics that followed.

There is little new in all this, but few theses have been confirmed as thoroughly by events, and though it is good to be original, it is better to be right. All three books give faithful accounts in terms of a class struggle. Whether they are correct in assuming as they appear to do, that the economic struggle is primary and the racial antagonism secondary, is another question. Perhaps because they do not believe in racial myths themselves, the authors have treated the psychology of nationalism in the Rhodesias a little too lightly. Obviously the nationalists on either side are moved by much more than economic self-interest and the struggle between them is more fundamental than that between Disraeli's two nations or between capital and labour. For the African to find and assert his historic identity is a necessity of the heart. On keeping his identity the European has made up his mind. This much our authors fully allow, but they have not quite uncovered how these explosive nationalistic prides and prejudices make the Rhodesian situation different in nature from anything in Victorian social history or Marxist theory. Much deeper research into the character of African nationalism will be required to solve this problem.

In bringing the Two Nations from 1953 to their year of decision in 1960, however, Philip Mason has chosen to concentrate his study upon the issue of the moment rather than the problem for the future. He reviews the course of the Federation with a candid eye on the Federal Review Conference. It is an historical tract for the times that reads like a grand remonstrance from all the best British liberal periodicals at once, and of its kind nothing could be better. When the archives are opened Mr. Clegg's account of Whitehall's reasons for federating the three territories may be found nearer the mark. But for its lucid discussion of African unrest, the halting advances toward partnership, the Todd crisis and future policy, Mr. Mason's book will stand. Once more, the two writers come to much the same conclusions. The Federation will be finished when the two northern territories pass under African rule, as one day

they must; and if as they may, white Southern Rhodesians chose the South African course rather than accept African rule, their country may well become another Algeria. An historian's predictions are more often wrong than right and miracles do occur in history more frequently than is often imagined. But on the liberal analysis of southern African history—and it has rarely proved wrong—white Rhodesia as Mason writes, ' has come to a fork in the road which cannot be postponed or avoided '. ' In the long run, their hope lies in African goodwill and the sooner they show trust the more likely they are to meet with generosity. The alternative is to shelter behind their whiteness and take a path which appears to be safe but in fact leads to disaster.'

LITERACY AND PERSONALITY

A Review Article

by

A. D. JONES

Search for Security—An Ethno-psychiatric Study of Rural Ghana. By M. J. FIELD. Faber and Faber, London, 1960. Pp. 478. 42*s.*

White Man—A Study of the Attitudes of Africans to Europeans in Ghana before Independence. By GUSTAV JAHODA. Oxford University Press for Institute of Race Relations, London, 1961. Pp. 144. 21*s.*

ANYONE familiar with the cheerful, friendly, outwardly confident African, will not recognize him in either of these works. Jahoda, in his analysis of African attitudes towards Europeans, emphasizes the feelings of inferiority which Africans have of themselves. Field's work is primarily a study of mental disorder.

In 1955, Field began a study of the new shrines which have sprung up in rural Ghana in the last thirty years. She estimates that, excluding the Northern Province, there are more than 10,000 shrines in existence. Her work is based on observing twenty-nine of these in one area of Ashanti.

The first part of Field's work makes exciting and controversial reading. She describes the everyday running of the shrines and the ideology behind them. She attempts to show that the impetus of the new shrines derives from the same source as that which established Old Testament prophets—namely, the disciplined use of states of dissociation. She also argues that the depressive elements in society perpetuate witchcraft and not, as is commonly supposed, the psychotic elements.

In the second part, Field presents case histories of the small but regular number of supplicants at the shrines whom she considers mentally ill. She classifies these in a common-place psychiatric system in which there emerges a surprisingly high incidence of depressive disorders, especially among women.

Jahoda's work is a study of African attitudes to Europeans in relation to their own self-image. He is at pains to show the limitations of formal categorization and presents a tentative typology inspired by Mannoni. According to this he distinguishes three types of individuals. There are those who are illiterate, tribal-oriented, and with almost no contact with Europeans and whose attitude towards them is one of almost complete adulation. There are those partially educated, partially tribal and with contact in

work situations and whose attitude towards Europeans is ambivalent. Finally, the better educated, non-tribal individual, with friendly contact, whose attitude towards Europeans as a whole may be cautious but who judge Europeans as individuals.

The minimal data on which he presents his typology is a serious weakness in a work of this type. His sample of Africans is very small and selective and nowhere does he employ any of the more reliable techniques for assessing attitudes. The best that can be said is that his data supports and highlights what he feels from his experience to be true.

Among the partially educated group he notes two things. There is a marked attitude of inferiority towards everything African. He suggests this is yet another example of the " minority group phenomenon " in which a subservient group takes on the disparaging view of themselves held by those who are dominant. There is also a tendency among this group to show aggression towards Europeans. He attributes this to the failure, on the part of many partial literates, to attain the superior position which they feel education will bring.

One might expect from Jahoda's findings a higher incidence of mental illness among the partially educated group. Field detects this among schizophrenics but argues that the correlation may be a spurious one. She does find, however, among the everyday, normal supplicants at the shrines evidence which seems to tally with Jahoda's description of the partly educated individual. There is a higher incidence of anxiety over ' not prospering ' both among literates who have failed either to get a job or to succeed at one and among literates and illiterates who have embarked on a modern calling (most notably, lorry driving) and failed.

If Jahoda's argument is true for Central Africa then Europeans should be thankful for one thing. The feeling of inferiority among the partially literate and the consequent aggression towards Europeans has not made relationships, on a personal or mass level, completely unworkable. Where Europeans have the power to promote or repress individual or mass African aspirations there is a danger that they might become so. The passive African is most probably one who accepts his inferior status. By promoting him, one promotes the inferior image, which in turn increases the likelihood of aggression in the future. Far better to promote the assertive African who won't accept inferior status. His demands may seem unreasonable to Europeans because he lacks what Europeans consider to be the full qualifications to gain them. Nevertheless the feelings of inferiority will be neutralized and the possibility of their manifestation in the form of an overwhelming aggressive hostility to Europeans will be reduced.

REVIEWS

Tanganyika and International Trusteeship. By B. T. G. Chidzero. Published for the Institute of International Affairs by Oxford University Press, 1961. Pp. 276 + 2 maps in end case. 38*s.*

Of the British states in Africa which are described as multi-racial Tanganyika alone has escaped the entrenchment of substantial economic and political power in the hands of a European minority. As a result the Territory has avoided the worst extremes of racial conflict and so far the transition to majority rule has taken place with enviable smoothness. The price for avoiding European domination has been a slower rate of economic progress into the modern world, but this may in the end prove to have been less serious than the political deadlocks reached in other plural societies. In *Tanganyika and International Trusteeship* Dr. Chidzero provides valuable information and comment on these problems. He regards Tanganyika as the product of three basic sets of factors—the individual circumstances of the Territory, British Colonial Policy, and international trusteeship—and analyses the development of the country since 1920 in the light of these. In particular he attempts the formidable task of estimating the influence of international trusteeship on the fortunes of Tanganyika.

The book is divided into four parts which together amount virtually to a history of Tanganyika under British rule. The work was finished early in 1958, but an appendix carries the story forward to the end of 1959. Part I deals with the special status of Tanganyika under League of Nations Mandate and, since 1946, under United Nations Trusteeship. Two excellent chapters are devoted to the problem this status raised in the various moves for the closer association of the British East African territories, an episode which Dr. Chidzero considers reveals ' perhaps the most important influence which international trusteeship has had on Tanganyika's political fortunes '. He attempts to show that the existence of the Mandate was of positive value in preventing Tanganyika's individual status from being submerged by that of Kenya. During this period the Mandate did undoubtedly exercise a negative influence. Uncertainty about the future and in particular the possibility that the Territory might be returned to Germany inhibited foreign investment and arrested economic development.

Part II examines the development of self-governing institutions and the general political advancement of the people towards independence. A contrast is drawn between the inter-war and post-war periods, although in both of these there was a general coincidence of views between Britain and the two successive international authorities. In the former period independence was seen as a prospect so

remote as not to need consideration, particularly during the years of Sir Donald Cameron's Governorship, when the emphasis was on the protection of African interests and the introduction of Indirect Rule as a training only in local self-government.

Since 1945, however, the goal of self-government and independence for the Territory has been Britain's clearly stated objective and the policy of the Trusteeship Council has been to press for its speedy realization. The effect of this, Dr. Chidzero argues, has been to keep the political pot boiling merrily in Tanganyika. African politicians have received great moral support as well as international publicity from the Trusteeship Council's efforts to force the pace, while Britain has constantly had to be on guard, for reasons of international politics, against too much criticism of her administration of the Trust Territory. Here again, international trusteeship is seen by Dr. Chidzero as having had a significant effect on Tanganyika's political and constitutional development.

In Part III the response of the inhabitants of the Territory and of Britain to the political problems created by the multiracial population is considered. This aspect came most to the fore in the early 1950's when, with self-government no longer a remote prospect, Britain applied the controversial policy of multi-racialism or political partnership to Tanganyika in the hope that a co-ordination of interests between the racial groups would take place before the introduction of majority rule. In Tanganyika, as elsewhere, this policy tended to be seen by the local European minority more as a delaying tactic, but, Dr. Chidzero concludes, 'the unremitting pressure of the Trusteeship Council, the constant probing and questioning as to the meaning of multi-racialism, has checked the Administering Authority from moving in Tanganyika towards the policies she is applying in Kenya or the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.'

Finally, Part IV is concerned with the all-important question of land, around which so many problems revolve in those African territories which have attracted substantial European settlement. In Tanganyika all land, excepting freehold land acquired before the Land Ordinance of 1923, is public land and cannot be alienated in perpetuity. Since 1928, with few exceptions, African land rights have been strictly preserved and alienation in the form of rights of occupancy for limited periods has been so controlled that only about 2 per cent of the total land area has alienated for all purposes, including European settlement. Moreover the absence of rigidly defined tribal areas or reserves has avoided significant geographical segregation and the problems of creating a common society are therefore easier than in other multi-racial territories. 'The essential contribution of international trusteeship,' writes Dr. Chidzero of the land situation, 'is that both the Permanent Mandates Commission and the Trusteeship Council have insisted on the protection of actual and potential African land rights and interests.'

This kind of judgement, like those quoted earlier, refers only to the advocacy of certain policies which happen largely to coincide with those actually pursued. They raise the whole question of how the influence of international trusteeship in such a situation can be satisfactorily assessed. Given trusteeship as the starting point of his analysis it was perhaps inevitable that Dr. Chidzero should incline to inflate its importance in the history of Tanganyika. Although his approach is generally cautious and categorical statements are in the main avoided, it is also apparent that his enthusiasm for the noble concepts of international trusteeship leads to assumptions greater than existing evidence would suggest. There is a tendency to confuse the influence international trusteeship ought to have exerted with what it can actually be shown to have done.

In part the problem is one of evidence. At the moment this is largely confined to official publications. But the very nature of international trusteeship limits the value of these sources. Lacking the power to enforce the obligations laid upon Britain, any significant influence on developments of trusteeship was bound to be subtle and indirect. This kind of influence can only be fully evaluated when it is possible to see exactly how decisions affecting Tanganyika were reached. And this will only be possible when the records of the Colonial Office are fully open to inspection. Mere conformity with the provisions of international trusteeship proves nothing by itself.

Thus while Dr. Chidzero is able to show trusteeship as a factor present in various important situations its actual, as opposed to its assumed, influence remains concealed. He is unable to demonstrate satisfactorily that the Territory's development would have followed a different course if international trusteeship had never been invented. He is aware of this dilemma and attempts to overcome it by making comparisons with other multi-racial territories. But these comparisons are too superficial to carry much weight and tend to ignore vital distinctions.

For example, Dr. Chidzero overlooks the very real differences in the relative strengths of the European settlers in Tanganyika and Kenya and then argues that the Mandate must help to account for the failure of the Tanganyika settlers to win the same power for themselves as those of Kenya. Perhaps more important than the Mandate was the fact that the Tanganyika settlers, in any case smaller in number, lacked a Lord Delamere to act as their spokesman. Of different social origin, the Tanganyika settlers had few of the unofficial contacts in high political circles provided by the large number of Kenya settlers of officer background and aristocratic connection. A large minority of Europeans in Tanganyika were of non-British origin, mostly Germans and Greeks, and lacked the power to put unofficial pressure on the British Government.

Moreover, the appointment of Sir Donald Cameron as Governor in 1925 suggests that Britain never had the intention of pursuing

in Tanganyika the same policies as in Kenya. The appointment was a turning point in Tanganyika's history. His widespread introduction of Indirect Rule and an agricultural policy in which European interests were described as 'an incidental and not the principal factor' reflect an attitude to Britain's purposes in Africa which Cameron had previously learnt in Nigeria. Even before Cameron the Land Ordinance of 1923 had been modelled on that of Northern Nigeria.

On the evidence presented in this book the view that international trusteeship has played a large part in Tanganyika's development must be regarded as unproven. But Dr. Chidzero has succeeded not only in gathering together a considerable amount of information but also in raising numerous questions for the researcher of the future. His book is a welcome addition to the growing number of academic works on Africa and a valuable study in the history of a Colonial Territory.

RICHARD BROWN

University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Salisbury.

The Eastern Lacustrine Bantu (Ganda, Soga), by MARGARET CHAVE FALLERS.—Ethnographic Survey of Africa, East Central Africa, Part XI. London, International African Institute, 1960. Pp. 86. 12*s.* 6*d.*

THE two largest groups of Bantu-speaking peoples in Uganda are the Ganda and the Soga; the Ganda, who number only a little under a million, are certainly also the best known. It is good, therefore, to have them represented now in the 'Ethnographic Survey' series, especially so satisfactorily as in the work under review.

Mrs. Fallers' survey is not the 'scissors-and-paste' compilation of ethnographic snippets which (generally through no fault of their authors) some of the earlier volumes in this series have been. It is a coherent and rounded account of two neighbouring and closely related peoples by an anthropologist who has spent several years in both countries, and who knows both the people and the literature about them (a quite extensive one in the case of the Ganda) well. Mrs. Fallers wisely does not attempt full ethnographic coverage—the reader will search in vain for a discussion of twin or mortuary ceremonies, for example, nor will he find any account of royal accession ritual, though the bibliography contains adequate references to the sources of information on these matters. There would have been little point in making such an attempt; we already have two celebrated anthropological monographs on the Ganda, and Dr. Lloyd Fallers has recently published a full-length study of the Soga in his *Bantu Bureaucracy*.

In fact, Mrs. Fallers' judgement as to what is important and what

is not for the understanding of present-day Buganda and Busoga is clearly reflected in the space she gives to her selected topics, which are set out under the broad heads customary in these surveys. Thus more than half of the volume is devoted to demography (including a discussion of the large-scale immigration of other tribes into Buganda) and economy. The long section on economy covers such important matters as land tenure and market agriculture, and indeed it could hardly be denied that it is its economic history more than anything else which has made Buganda what it is today. The development of cotton and coffee in Uganda is of course one of the most fantastic—and well-documented—success stories in Africa; in 1956, Mrs. Fallers reports, about £30 million were paid to growers of these two cash crops, mostly in Buganda and Busoga. There are a couple of pages on language and literature, nine pages on the family, kinship and unilineal descent groupings, seven pages on government and law, and five on religion and magic. A little more might, perhaps, usefully have been added about the modern political scene and contemporary political parties, but these have been fully discussed in recent publications, which are referred to in Mrs. Fallers' bibliography.

It is an important incidental function of these Surveys that they may indicate those areas in which our ethnographic knowledge is most deficient. It comes as something of a surprise, for example, to find that for a people so long and so well studied as the Ganda our understanding of their kinship system, which appears to differ significantly from the Soga-Nyoro ' Omaha ' type, is so incomplete (it is not helped in the present volume by the faulty kinship chart facing p. 56, in which some of the horizontal lines are missing—they are *all* missing on the Soga chart on the same page). And there are still many questions unanswered in regard to the traditional religious cults of both peoples, and the degree of their survival at the present time. In the latter connection, however, it must be noted (and Mrs. Fallers has done so) that many years of intense mission activity have radically affected, where they have not eliminated, a large number of the traditional practices. Of more contemporary practical importance are the immigrant religions, both Christianity and Islam, and Mrs. Fallers very properly devotes a couple of pages to these.

There is a useful bibliography, listing works written in Luganda, and linguistic studies, separately from the general list, which itself contains nearly 200 entries, and a particularly interesting addition is a list of newspapers published (monthly or more often) in Uganda in 1956; there are twenty-six of these, all except two published in local African languages, seventeen in Luganda.

This Survey, then, is first and foremost a survey of the Ganda and Soga themselves, rather than merely an abstract of the extensive ethnographic literature about them, though this is adequately recorded. What it describes are the Ganda and Soga states of

today, after nearly three-quarters of a century of Western contact, not the traditional systems as reconstructed from literary sources. Its interest, therefore, is not restricted to professional ethnographers and tribal historians. For anyone who wants an intelligent and up-to-date survey of the condition of these two important African peoples in the middle of the twentieth century Mrs. Fallers' study is essential reading.

JOHN BEATTIE.

AFRICAN STUDIES

AFRICAN STUDIES (formerly ' Bantu Studies ') is a quarterly journal devoted to the study of African Administration, Cultures and Languages. The Editorial Committee is drawn from the Department of Bantu Languages and the Department of Social Anthropology and African Administration in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

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President of the Northern Rhodesia Society

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